

The Shift In Cold War Policies Of Soviet Union

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Cold War Origins and Soviet Policy Development

The World has witnessed two horrifying wars in the form of World War I and World War II, and increased global tension in the form of the Cold War. The reasons behind the Cold War are complicated and interlinked, but examining some of the Soviet Union's policies might help to understand part of the debate about the Cold War. Cold War was initiated due to two distinguished political theories, Wilsonianism and Leninism.

Wilsonianism Leninism and Ideological Conflict

Wilsonianism focused on capitalism and economic freedom as a solution to the political conflict. In contrast, Leninism focused on Marx's approach to solving the international conflict. The Cold War was the tension between communism and capitalism. The Soviet Union and the United States shifted policies to fit the national needs rooted in the individual ideologies of the leaders. The paper will discuss the rationale behind Cold War policies by the Soviet Union based on the domestic interest and politics and the individual ideologies of the leadership. The policies changed during the Cold War represent the perceived national interests and ideologies of the people.

Nuclear Deterrence and Third-World Competition

As the Soviet Union and the United States became the deciding powers after World War II, they were scared to escalate a war in their lands due to the proliferation of nuclear weapons. (Gaddis, 2005) Therefore, the policy was changed and brought to third-world countries. The Soviet Union started expanding its influence over the central European countries to challenge the United States' influence in Europe. In opposition, America came up with the Marshall Plan. Moreover, the North Korean attack on the South eSouthted the rebuilding of military capabilities in the United States in the 1950s. Similarly, further events such as the Hungarian Revolts. These disturbances within Europe were defining Soviet domination. However, the United States was not ready to accept the dominance. Moreover, both nations were scared to confront each other due to their enhanced military capabilities. The confrontation would have brought destruction to the whole of Europe and damaged both nations.

Expansion of Cold War Confrontations

Therefore, the Cold War in Europe turned to full-fledged confrontations in the Third World. Moreover, Lenin's ideology of the colonial world being allied with the proletariat strengthened the belief that third-world countries would assist the Soviet Union in weakening the powerful countries of the West, including the United States. It was a national interest to integrate and gain support from the Third World countries to become a superpower, and the Third World countries were included in the Cold War. The control of the ideologies of the new nations in the Global South was an indication of the winner as a globally accepted ideology, and the nation was to be considered the superpower. Both the US and the USSR tried to gain the cooperation of third-world countries, and this changed the foreign policies of both countries. Both the countries provided heavy military and economic support to influence the countries around the world. For instance, Nikita Khrushchev provided military and economic support to Egypt to minimize the dominance of Western political dominance in the Middle East. USSR supported the Arab world against Israel to minimize the influence of the United States and Western politics. Although it all seems that the support of these countries was without the self-interest of the actors, the support was provided for the benefit of their nations and national interests as they believed such support would gain more power for the USSR. The efforts of expansion by the Soviet Union were felt by the US and the countries with Western Political ideologies that they considered a threat to capitalism. The USSR was able to gain substantial support from the military and economic support. However, the policy changed when the Middle Eastern countries tried to solve the issue of Israel once and for all, and that too prioritizing the national interest.

Soviet Military Intervention and National Interest

The Soviet Union's policy of direct military intervention in the regional conflict was based on the national interest of expanding its influence and power, aiming at eliminating the US's influence and capitalist imperialism. The involvement of the Soviet Union in the regional conflict was a way of gaining support. Even though the countries had not yet followed the socialist approaches, their need for assistance encouraged the USSR's intervention in their countries. The Soviet Union had developed a two-track approach to expand their economy, ensure security in some countries, and seek expansion of communism around the world. (Kornai, 1992) This kind of policy was helpful for the Soviets not only in expanding but also in strengthening economic development and ensuring security. The dual policy towards the states was helping the Soviet Union, and it had grown positive about its success against capitalism. However, the invasion of Afghanistan by the Soviet Union infuriated the United States as it was an open threat to the superpower.

Leadership Ideologies and Foreign Policy Change

Moreover, the leaders played a role in promoting their ideologies and influencing the policies of the

Cold War. Nikita Khrushchev, Leonid Brezhnev and Mikhail Gorbachev's ideologies of expansion and cooperation with the US impacted the domestic and foreign policies. Khrushchev focused on Middle Eastern countries, such as supporting Egypt with military and economic support to restrict the United States' influence in the Arab world. It was aiming at expanding its influence to equalize or gain the status of superpower. It was the strongly held ideologies of Lenin that influenced Khrushchev, and he changed the policies as he considered fit according to the ideology. The strongly held communist ideology and the concept that the newly founded nations would prefer to join the socialist country was the impetus for the economic and military support of the central European and third-world countries. Similarly, Nikita Khrushchev believed that the interdependence of the communist countries would weaken the major opponents of the USSR. He focused on expanding the influence to weaken the United States as well as other European countries. As it would help the Soviet Union to become a superpower, the USSR started expansion into the third world, considering the prospect of becoming a superpower. Khrushchev vigorously stood against minimizing the influence of the Western political ideology of capitalism on the Middle East and South Asia. He pushed Soviet influence and presence in the areas where there were strategic concerns. For instance, supporting Arabs to fight Israel and Soviet support to Egypt were part of such endeavours.

Brezhnev's Expansionist Strategy

Moreover, Brezhnev's expansionist approaches to the Soviet Union gained a certain level of dominance in world politics and reduced the dominance of the United States in certain places. Moreover, the lack of intervention from the US had encouraged the Soviet Union to expand military and nuclear weapons, claiming overall superiority globally. His policies minimized blackmailing from the US using nuclear dominance as he developed military and nuclear capacities. He minimized his military, economic, and training troop policies in the global south and shifted towards directly interfering in the conflict. The policy was implemented because of the perceived concepts of the leadership that the US would not interfere with the policies of the USSR. Additionally, in building a good relationship with the US, the leaders were certain that they could interfere in a conflict without being criticized or stopped by the US. Hence, they took part in the control and fought in other lands. The Soviet leadership supported the groups, which they thought would help them expand the communist ideologies in their country if they could form one. The US also played a role in strengthening the ideologies of the Soviet leaders as President Nixon was defeated in Vietnam, and the involvement of the CIA in illegal activities weakened the US, consequently strengthening the Soviet Leadership.

Gorbachev's Reforms and Policy Reorientation

However, with the death of Brezhnev, the strongly held beliefs of expansionism and socialist ideologies were weakened. And people had doubts about the USSR's policies. When Gorbachev came to power, he wanted to improve the economic situation of the Soviet Union as it was deteriorating due

to constant involvement in the wars. His policies, despite opposition from some of the bureaucrats, focused on democratization and openness, focusing on transparency. His inclusion of people through their feedback was a way to improve economic development and assist the leaders in implementing the reforms. Furthermore, his policy to achieve new investment from the West created some agreement between the two dominant countries. He aimed at stabilizing the economy of the USSR through loans from the West, which in part damaged the earlier stronghold of the USSR around the globe. Therefore, his new thinking and integration with Europe and the United States helped to resolve the Cold War.

Conclusion on Soviet Leadership and National Interest

To conclude, the leaders and the domestic interests played a role in the Cold War policies of the USSR. National interest and search for power changed the policies to become powerful and expand their influence in the world. Similarly, the leaders focused on the best ideologies to assist national growth and development. The perception of leaders regarding national interest influenced the policies. In the beginning, leaders like Nikita focused on expanding and influencing the global South and expanding the economy of the nation through coalition instead of conflict.

References

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