



FORCED TO FLUTTER:

THE COLD WAR AND WASHINGTON'S POLICY OF CONTAINMENT



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I. Kennan's Prophecy

- Kennan gave philosophical foundations to the Cold war.
- Predicted that Soviet's decline is **inevitable**.
- Soviet Union's economy is inherently **unsustainable**.
- Believed that American government can **overwhelm** the Soviets with strategic military and political prowess.
- Soviets system is "**fragile and artificial** in its psychological foundation."
- Believed that U.S.A cannot sit in sidelines and wait for Soviet demise.
- Recommended **active containment**.

Abstract:

Most now regard Cold War as a surreal phase of a tremulous dream in which few leaders held the fate of millions within their grasp and juggled nuclear bombs for ideological purposes before the circus of humanity. The paper analysed Washington's Containment of Communism. The first part of the paper examined how George Kennan gave philosophical foundations to the conflict. The second part surveyed the policy of containment by arguing that America was eventually successful by renewing capitalist economies of Western Europe, by using soft and hard force throughout the "neutral" Global South, and through tactical alliances with other communist nations. The paper concluded by situating the Cold War in a historical context.

Methodology:

The **interdisciplinary** paper relied on both **primary** and **secondary** sources. It consulted memoirs and diaries of key politicians of the era, and also their biographies. Since the paper incorporated such **varied fields economic, philosophical, theoretical and international relations**, it transcended academic parochialism, "unifieldism" and paradigmatic approaches.



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II. CONTAINMENT

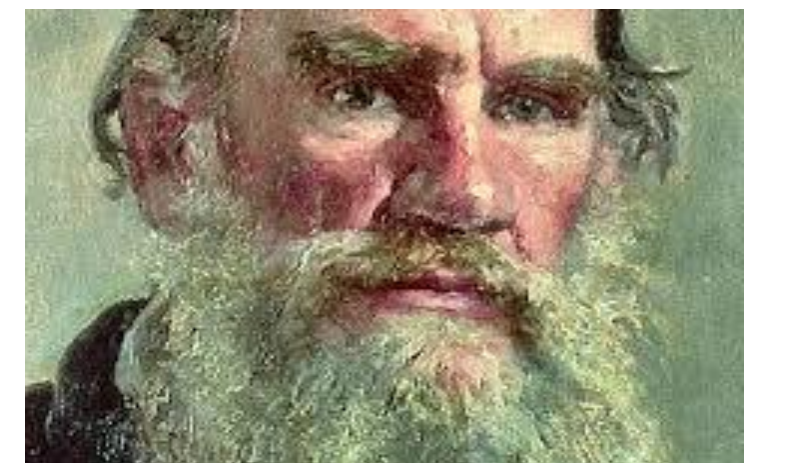
- End of the Second World War – Europe lay in ruins. **Marshall Plan** instated to stimulate economic growth. Also to ensure American presence and curb Soviet expansion. (U.S.A. gave about \$160 billion)
- **Truman Doctrine**: "to support free peoples resisting attempted subjugation"
 - Mixture of **Wilsonian idealism** and **Realpolitik**.
 - America's transition from isolationism to internationalism.
- Two hegemonic powers fighting through **proxy wars**:
 - **Korea (1950-53)**. The Western coalition eventually won, but Korea was divide into Communist North and Democratic South. Soviet "dagger at the heart of Japan" (Dean Acheson).
 - **Vietnam: A Necessary War?** The paper takes a counter-intuitive stance. Argues that Korea was more costly than Vietnam. In Korea, 3M people died in 3 years; in Vietnam, 2M people died in 10+ years.
- Nixon-Kissinger partnership: Triumph of **Triangular diplomacy**.
 - Nixon outwitted Soviets with his **opening to China (1972)**.
 - Kissinger, a Modern Metternich, began peace talks with Vietnam. "Peace with Honour."
 - Arms Limitation Treaty (SALT I) signed. A temporary peace.
- Thatcher elected in U.K. (1979), Reagan elected in U.S.A. (1980) = **Cold War burns again**. Revival of heated rhetoric.
 - They recognized internal problems of the Soviet Union.
 - Gorbachev chosen as Leader (1985). More freedoms granted. **Fall of Berlin Wall = End of Communism**.



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III. Conflict in Historical and Philosophical Contexts

- In **1989**, the Berlin Wall lay in ruined in rubble.
- Were people like Reagan, Thatcher or Gorbachev Hegelian "**world-historical individuals**"? Or was there **unconscious** development of history?
- Post-structural emphasis
- Tolstoy: "Life of nations in not contained in few men."
- My conclusion: The Soviet's doom was inevitable because of their inferior economic model.



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1945 – End of WWII

1947 – Kennan

1948 – Marshall

1950-53 - Korea

1959-73 - Vietnam

1972 – Nixon-China

1989 – Fall of Berlin W.