

## Historiography:

### **The Orthodox View:**

- Stalin and the ideology of Marxism/Leninism was responsible for the Cold War
- For Americans it was in the nature of communism to want to spread its ideology
- Believed that the ideology was expansionist, aggressive wanting to “liberate the masses” from capitalism
- Stalin had shown his willingness and ease in breaking promises and his violation of rivals:
  - EXAMPLE: **Declaration of Liberated Europe**
  - Declaration promised: “free elections of Governments responsive to the will of the people and to facilitate where necessary the holding of elections,” however Stalin did not follow through
- He introduced brutal political control of Eastern Europe
- Arthur Schlesinger wrote:
  - *“Leninism and totalitarianism created a structure of thought and behaviour which made post-war collaborations between Russia and America... inherently impossible.”*
- John Lewis Gaddis writes in *We now Know, rethinking the Cold War*:
  - *“I think the ‘new’ history is bringing us back to an old answer: that as long as Stalin was running the Soviet Union a Cold War was unavoidable.”*

### **The Revisionist View:**

- Emerged from America in late 60s
- Believed that the US didn’t realise how weak USSR was compared to America after WWII
- Soviets suffered massively but America experiences economic boom and had nuclear power as well
- Stalin realised this and thus grew his desire to protect himself in Eastern Europe
- The American’s used their superiority to issue the Truman Doctrine giving them rights to intervene anywhere
- US tried to impose their ideals on others with values of liberty and free market applied globally
- Post WWII, US had the power to enforce their will
- The **open door policy** was used to try and control countries through economic dependence
- Colonialism had never been popular in US because of history of British imperialism
- This economic imperialism was a different form however
- It was referred to by Russians as “dollar-imperialism”
- William Appelman Williams writes:
  - *“It was the decision of the United States to employ its new and awesome power in keeping with the traditional Open Door Policy which crystallised the cold war...”*

### **The Post Revisionist View:**

- Through the access to new archives, this school emerged in late 1970s
- The Cold War was a result of mutual misunderstandings and overreactions due to FEAR from both sides

- Americans didn't really understand the USSR's need for security against the West, her need for buffer states and the effect of the Open Door Policy
- The Soviets didn't realise how their policy in Eastern Europe affected opinions in the West
- It is clear that the development of nuclear weapons and the different ideologies of the two countries resulted in a lot of mutual misunderstanding and FEAR
- Defensive methods by one, were often seen as offensive by the other
- This led to a vicious cycle of action and reaction, leading to the development of nuclear weapons and LESS SECURITY of both sides
- This called for a **security dilemma**:
- These historians argue that it was more ***miscalculations and fear that created the Cold War***
- Melvyn Leffler writes:
  - *"...The Kremlin was so totalitarian and repressive. US officials intelligently decided to rebuild Western Europe... These actions were of decisive importance in fuelling the Cold War.... Western Europe required security guarantees, not the extensive armaments that America wanted it to have."*

### The "Realpolitik" School:

- Roots in Bismarck's Germany
- Argues that some politicians tend to ignore ideology when dealing with other states, as long as it's to their own benefit
- Dismisses the importance of ideology
- Sees it as only an additional weapon used deliberately by super powers to rally support of the nation
- Seen as a propaganda tool and a mask used to get support while trying to fulfil their own interest
- There were other measures including economic pressure and military power to achieve their goals
- American politicians spoke of *"Godless communism,"* when they wanted to access new and important markets
- Stalin depicted the hostility and danger surrounding capitalism that would threaten the USSR
- Richard Nixon was a well-known anti-communist that was prepared to cooperate with the USSR and China as long as America got what they wanted in return
- Historians believe that:
  - This school will downgrade the importance of ideology in explaining the origins behind the Cold War