

Cold War Study Guide

Comprehensive details on key events, causes, consequences, and historiographical perspectives to help you excel in your IB History Paper 2 exam.

1. Origins of the Cold War (1945-1949)

Causes:

- Ideological Clash: Capitalism (U.S.) vs. Communism (USSR) led to mutual distrust.
- Post-WWII agreements at Yalta and Potsdam Conferences failed to settle Germany's future.
- U.S. use of the atomic bomb heightened Soviet fears.
- Stalin's push to secure a buffer zone in Eastern Europe (Poland, Hungary, etc.).

Key Actions:

- Truman Doctrine (1947): U.S. pledged support to countries resisting communism.
- Marshall Plan (1948): U.S. provided \$13 billion for European reconstruction.
- NATO Formation (1949): Military alliance to counter Soviet influence.

Consequences:

- Europe divided: Eastern Bloc (Soviet-controlled) vs. Western democracies.
- Start of proxy wars and arms race.

Historiography:

- Orthodox: Stalin's expansionism caused the Cold War.
- Revisionist: U.S. economic imperialism antagonized the USSR.
- Post-Revisionist: Both sides misunderstood each other's motives.

2. Berlin Blockade and Airlift (1948-1949)

Causes:

- Division of Germany and Berlin into occupation zones.
- U.S. introduced a new currency (Deutsche Mark) in West Germany, upsetting Stalin.

Key Actions:

- Soviet Blockade: Cut off road, rail, and canal access to West Berlin.
- Berlin Airlift: Western allies delivered 2.3 million tons of supplies over 11 months.

Consequences:

- Highlighted U.S. commitment to containment.
- Strengthened Western resolve; led to the creation of West Germany (FRG) and East Germany (GDR).
- NATO formed as a direct response.

Chapter 25 Cold War Study Guide Key

Krista Dornbush



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