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The Cold War Begins

June 28, 1999



The Cold War Begins

The most striking feature of the Cold War was the absence of "hot" war between the West and the East, despite the frigid relations between the two superpowers, the United States and the Soviet Union, and their respective alliances, the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO)

and the Warsaw Pact. In 1945, a disenchanted cipher clerk at the Soviet embassy in Ottawa defected with documents that revealed a widespread Communist spy ring primarily aimed at stealing atomic secrets. The Cold War had begun, and the Soviet Union, the West's erstwhile ally was now seen as an expansionist and hostile ideological and military enemy. The first moves in the Cold War chess game - the disappearance of Eastern Europe behind the "Iron Curtain," the Communist coup in Czechoslovakia, the victory of Mao Tse-Tung in Chinese Civil War, the Berlin Blockade, the Korean War, and the Red Army's crushing of the Hungarian Uprising - were made during the 1940s and 1950s. These events were accompanied by a growing capacity of the Soviets to wage war with atomic and hydrogen bombs. The West, determined to contain the Communist threat, responded in kind, embarking with the East on a game of brinkmanship which spawned an arms race and a tense international environment where any misstep could lead to mutually assured destruction.

Story by:

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