Cold War – Us Outlook Essay, Research Paper

INTRODUCTIONThe Cold War was the elongated tension between the Soviet Union and the United States of America. It started in the mid 40’s after WWII had left Europe in shambles and Russia and the USA in superpower positions. The Cold War was a clash of these supergiants in political, ideological, military, and economic values and ideas. Though military build up was great on both sides neither one ever directly fought each other. This essay is going to bring forth the following points: Rise of the Cold War, events in and because of the Cold War, the fall of Russia and the end of the Cold War.RISE OF COLD WARAgain Germany had been thwarted in its plans of total domination. It had been a combined effort by all the Western powers and a few Eastern powers too. England was devastated, France had been literally burnt to the ground, and many small nation had suffered economic failure. To the East Russia had suffered many losses from the vain siege of the Nazi’s. But they were in better shape then Europe. They still had a military and a running, somewhat , economy. In the late 40’s through early 50’s the Soviet Union started to spread the Lenin ideological as it started moving in the Westward position. In 1947 the US started funding the rebuilding of European infrastructure in a system called the Marshall Plan. Russia in turn brought forth its own funding called the Molotov Plan. Because of that, they were able to spread communism through many countries. Some of these nations were: Poland, Romania, Bulgaria, Hungary, Czechoslovakia, Eastern Germany, and numerous countries in Southeastern Asia. But on the US side we had the support from almost the entire Western Europe. So the tension started, between Western Europe or a republic society and Eastern Europe and communism.KEY EVENTS DURING COLD WARThere are many key events that happened throughout the entire duration of the Cold War. The fist main events that led up to the tension were the foreign aid policies. These policies were able to divide up Europe between the superpowers. After Europe was divided up treaty organizations and alliances stated forming up again. One of these alliances was the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO). This allied the western portion of Europe. Next came the Warsaw Pact, it was the communistic version of NATO. Throughout the Cold War, relations between the Soviet Union and the west alternated between times of tension and crises and periods of reduced tension and limited cooperation. Though the two superpowers never engaged each other militarily, they were periodically caught up in major political crises that had the potential to become warfare. One example was the Soviet blockade on Western Berlin. The Russians threatened, and did, block of supply routs to Western Berlin. The people in the city were staving and dying from the lack of supplies. Because of this the US had to make periodic supply drops into the city. Some other examples are the Cuban missile crises, where the Russian funded Cuban military had secretly made or smuggled nuclear missiles onto the island and pointed them at the USA. The U.S. did go to battle though. We fought two major battles against the communists. The fist was over Korea. North Korea a communistic satellite tried to spread there ideas through hostile takeover. The US funded and aided South Korea until they were able to fend of their attackers. The second time it was in Vietnam. Like the first battle north Vietnam was trying to concur south Vietnam and make it a communistic nation. The US sent massive man power into it and lost lots of solders, but we were unsuccessful in stopping the north Vietnamese. Soon tension grew so high that the US knew that they had to do something about all the nuclear missiles that Russia possessed.REAGAN’S ADMNISTRATION: STAR WARSThe downfall of the cold war started when Ronald Reagan came into office in 1981. Reagan had two main priorities. He wanted to cut taxes and increase defense spending. He felt that the United States of America should take a confrontational approach towards Russia. Mikhail Gorbachev was the leader of Russia in 1985. He wanted to improve the Russian economy. He also wanted to improve relations with the United States. He used his glasnost (openness to public debate) policy and perestroika (restructuring) to help the Russian economy. Both leaders wanted a “margin of safety”. Reagan took a tough stand against Russia and it’s allies. The soviets could clearly see that when Reagan said he wanted a”margin of safety”, he meant that the United States should be superior to Russia. Moscow would not let this happen. They wanted equality. Reagan also believed that military power and respect for America abroad were inseparable from economic strength. However, Reagan’s defense policy resulted in the doubling of the debt of the United States. He used the money for new strategic programs and for expensive conventional programs such as expanding the navy from four hundred to six hundred ships. Reagan also received increases for the CIA and other intelligence agencies so they could aid anti-Russian forces in Afghanistan and other Third-World countries. Reagan’s administration did not have strong or consistent policies towards Russia. It was divided between people who favored careful negotiations and people who strongly opposed efforts to deal with “the enemy.” The negotiators were centered in the State department. It included George Schultz, Richard Burt, and Secretary of State Alexander Haig. The other side included Caspar Weinberger, Richard Perle and Senator Henry Jackson. Soviets became frightened by the United States’ policies. They were going to negotiate with Reagan at first but because of military buildup, lack of interest in arms control, Soviets were afraid Reagan would attack the nation. Soviets kept the KGB (Russia’s version of the Federal Bureau of Investigation) on alert from 1981 to 1983. A Russian military plane had shot down a South Korean civilian airliner that was flying over Soviet territory. The plane was traveling from Anchorage, Alaska to Seoul 2 Korea. Sixty-one Americans were killed on the flight. When the United States heard about this; Reagan was furious. He denounced that the “Korean airline massacre” was a “crime against humanity” for which “there was absolutely no justification legal or moral…” Soviets said that they thought it was a spy plane and when they inquired who it was, they received no answer. That is why they shot it down. This crisis gave more tension to the cold war situation. Soviet leaders thought that the United States’ response to the airliner incident combined with the continuing lack of progress on arms control, was proof that they should not improve relations with the United States. That December, they withdrew from the arms control negotiations in Geneva. For this reason negotiations that would end the cold war were halted.Reagan proposed a program called “Strategic Defense Initiative (Also known as “Star Wars”).” The program was where an experimental rocket was launched off a remote island and intercepted an incoming ICBM (intercontinental ballistic missile) warhead that was about one hundred miles above earth. This was a demonstration of the Pentagon’s ability to solve the problems of ballistic-missile defense. It was Reagan’s support for “Star Wars” that enabled Gorbachev to take the initiative soon after coming to power in spring of 1985. Most Western Europeans derided “Star Wars” as “a pointless escalation in the arms race” and Gorbachev thought this way also. Gorbachev denounced “Star Wars” and tried to show that Russia was a peaceful nation. Russia offered to make deep cuts in it’s missiles if the United States would stop researching “Star Wars.” Gorbachev arranged a summit meeting in Geneva with Ronald Reagan which is where they had talks about “Star Wars.” Little progress was made on arms control and Reagan was held responsible.Gorbachev offered a few significant ideas. He agreed in principle to the 1981 United States proposal to eliminate medium range missiles from Europe and suggested that there be a fifty-percent cut in strategic weapons for the next five years. Then, Reagan proposed that they destroy all ballistic missiles for the next ten years and Gorbachev responded by suggesting they abolish all nuclear missiles. Reagan agreed but then Gorbachev made it clear the any further research of SDI (Strategic Defense Initiative) should only be done in the laboratory. Reagan then said that this restriction would “kill” SDI. When Gorbachev refused to move his position, Reagan left. Reagan was forced to choose between “Star Wars” and a deal that would end Soviet nuclear threat through disarmament. He concluded that that he only way for him to reach the US with his missiles was to launch them in sheer numbers. To do this he would have to change the governments funding of 30% of the military to 60%. Gorbachev offered to separate the European intermediate range missile issue from strategic and space weapons issues and said that he supported the long standing United States proposal to remove all Soviet and United States intermediate range missiles from Europe. Reagan responded positively to Gorbachev’s speech and he resumed talks with Gorbachev. “The modern world has become much too small and fragile for wars and policy of force. It cannot be saved and preserved if the thinking and actions built up over the centuries on the acceptability and permissibility of wars and armed conflicts are not shed. If the arms race continues, the situation in the world may assume such a character that it will no longer depend on the intelligence or will of political leaders. It may become captive to technology, to technocratic logic.” (Mikhail Gorbachev) Reagan agreed with Gorbachev and the United States signed a nuclear arms treaty eliminating all the intermediate-range missiles stationed in Europe. This was the first ever agreement that eliminated an entire class of nuclear weapons. American officials were sent to Russia to make sure that any violations were detected. CONCLUSIONOn November 11, 1989, the Berlin Wall came down. East Germany announced that all border restrictions were lifted. President Bush seized every chance to promote democracy in Eastern Europe. For 40 years, the seeds of democracy in Eastern Europe lay dormant, buried under the frozen tundra of the Cold War. And for 40 years the world has waited for the Cold War to end. And decade after decade, time after time, the flowering human spirit withered from the chill of conflict and oppression. And again the world waited. But the passion for freedom cannot be denied forever. The world has waited long enough. The time is right. Let Europe be whole and free. (George Bush) In October of 1990 the communistic government fell in Berlin, and the divided city was re-united. This was the final symbol of the fall of communism in Europe. A little bit later the Warsaw pact was abolished, and the last of the nuclear weapons were dispersed in the sea. Presidents George Bush and Mikhail Gorbachev officially ended the Cold War in 1991. Basically the end of the Cold War ended because the Soviet Union ceased to be a superpower.

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