

The Impossible Peace

At the origin of rivalry between the
US and the USSR, 1945-1952

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Part 1

How Did Bipolarism Come About?

- **Germany** and **Japan**, the most dangerous foes of the Grand Alliance (USA, UK, USSR). Alliance or a truce?
- The high point of inter-Allied co-operation: The **Yalta Conference**, 4-11 February 1945
- After Yalta, there were signs that the alliance would not hold for long. **President Truman** was less inclined than Roosevelt to accomodate Stalin's demands in Europe and Asia
- Both continents were set to become a battlefield in a newer international order



The Unresolved Fronts after World War II

Main threats to international stability

Europe

The German question
Eastern and Western Europe
Economic reconstruction

Asia

The capitulation of Japan
The division of Korea peninsula
Political turmoil in China



Part 2

What Is a Cold War?

→ Scholars outlined **five** distinctive characteristics:

Clear **ideological** division between two Superpowers (let's say, bipolarism)

The struggle more interests than purpose and supposed values. 'The essence of the problem is **the presence of the adversary**'

Change can only come about if the other side somehow is ready fundamentally to **rethink** its foreign policy (i.e. Gorbachev in the 1980s)

Co-operation is possible, but **limited**

Conflicts run **in parallel**, internationally (Europe, Asia, Africa, Latin America)



The Second Cold War: US-China Competition for Centrality in Infrastructure, Digital, Production, and Finance Networks

Seth Schindler  , Ilias Alami , Jessica DiCarlo , Nicholas Jepson , Steve Rolf , Mustafa Kemal Bayırbağ , ...show all



China and the United States: It's a Cold War, but don't panic

By Robert Daly | March 10, 2022

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What is the nature of relations between the United States and China? Hundreds of attempts to answer this question have been offered over of the past few years. The results have been both serious and silly, as analysts often conflate their desire to guide policy with their hope of coining a catchphrase that lands them in the history books. Most attempts to wed the needs of grand strategy and the methods of marketing have coalesced around the issue of whether the United States and China are now engaged in a Cold War



Robert Daly

Robert Daly directs the Kissinger Institute on China and the United States at the Wilson Center. He has 35 years' experience working on political,... [Read More](#)



COMMENTARY

The U.S.-China Trade War Has Become a Cold War

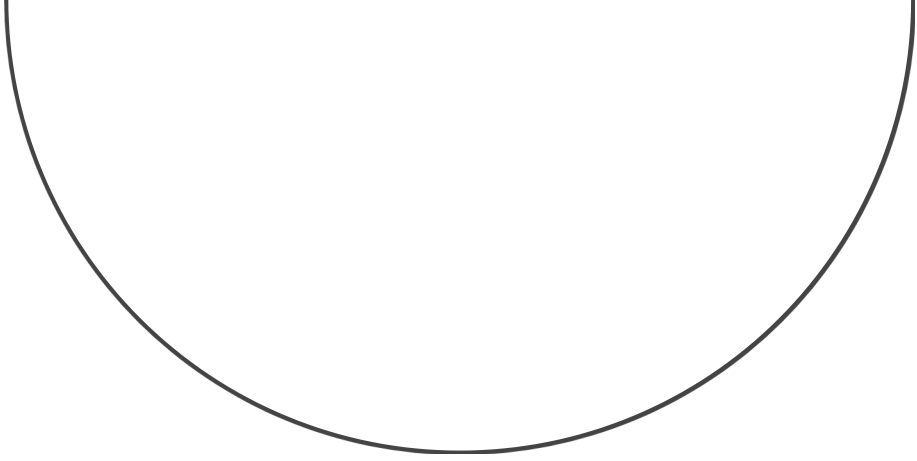
The U.S.-China trade war hasn't brought major economic wins to either country. For the United States, it may be time to focus on economic policy at home first.



By Yukon Huang
Published on September 16, 2021

What began as a trade war over China's unfair economic policies has now evolved into a so-called cold war propelled by differing ideologies. U.S.-China bilateral relations took a nosedive in 2018 when then U.S. president Donald Trump's obsession with trade deficits led him to impose punitive tariffs on China. The tariffs were followed by restrictions on both China's access to high-tech U.S. products and foreign investments involving security concerns and by allegations of unfair Chinese commercial practices.





Prompting for discussion

**Given these premises, can we speak of
a Cold War between the US and China?**

I do not think so



The Origins of the Cold War

- **March 1947** > Truman, Kennan and the policy of '**containment**': What, where and why
- Containment doctrine, first, and the Atlantic Alliance (April 1949), then, created the 'Political West' as we know it
- In August 1949, the USSR tested its first atomic bomb. The arms race escalated, as well as the US-USSR confrontation
- This happened in Europe, but what did occur in Asia?
October 1949 > Mao Zedong proclaimed the **People's Republic of China (PRC)**, a Communist-led government
- These dates are just **conventional** markers. Different interpretations exist →

Part 3

When the Communists and Nationalists Co-operated in China, 1924-1927 and 1937-1945



Manchuria: A long Disputed Territory with the Russian Empire/USSR



The birth of the PRC

A disruptive event occurred in the new international order of East Asia

A large-scale civil war resumed in June 1946 and the **double-dealing** of Chiang Kai-shek with the US and the USSR

After Japan announced its surrender, *Guomindang* immediately faced the major problems of restoring its rule in China (mainly, in Eastern and Northern China)

As any mediation or ceasefire **failed**, Washington assisted *Guomindang* with aid and troops (110,000), Moscow occupied the main ports in Manchuria. The Chinese issue involved the two Superpowers

Chinese Communists won, because of Chiang's weaknesses. The Nationalists fled to **Taiwan**. Mao thought that the new Chinese state's foreign policy should have based on a new pattern. The '**leaning to one side**'s concept and the 1950 PRC-USSR treaty. **BUT...**



The Korean War

This conflict militarised international politics far beyond previous levels

The war emerged from an array of Korean and international factors: the role of Korean exiles during WWII and the logic of bipolarism

In **August 1945**, the US and the USSR bypassed the Koreans in deciding to occupy their country and in choosing a boundary between their occupation forces

1948 > Two different governments in the peninsula. 'Republic of Korea' (South) and 'Democratic People's Republic of Korea' (North). Analysing the '*juche* ideology'

Since then the two states have pursued a strategy of unifying the peninsula. The Korean War erupted in **June 1950** between the Soviets **and the** UN Command led by MacArthur.

Signing of the armistice on **July 27, 1953**, along the **Panmunjom** line



Trump and Kim step into history at North Korea Demilitarised Zone, 30 June 2019



A Clear Family Resemblance

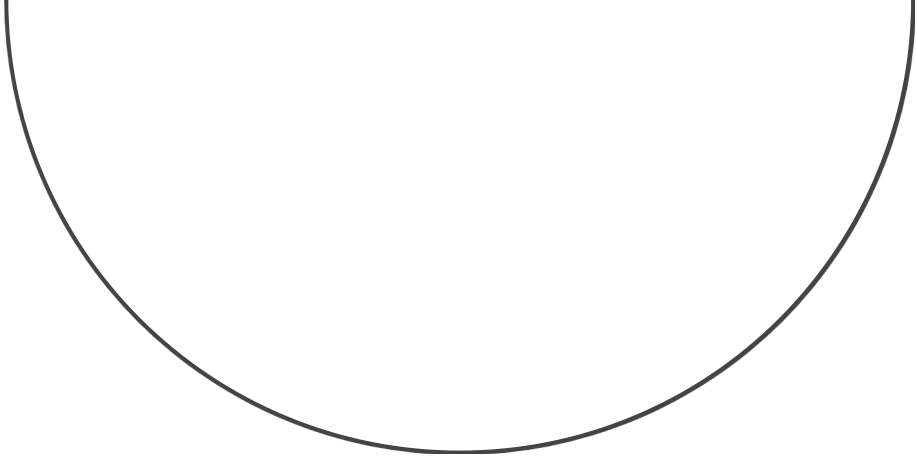


Kim Il Sung (1912-1994)



Kim Jong Un (1983?-)





Prompting for discussion

The *juche* ideology has so far
preserved the Kim dynasty

However, how has North Korea
survived despite isolation?



Propaganda and the convenience
of keeping Korea divided

The Occupied Japan

The dissolution of colonial empire and Japan's democratic makeover

On August 14, 1945 the Japanese government accepted the Allied powers (APs)' Potsdam Declaration ('unconditional surrender')

Main objectives of the Allied Powers (without USSR) in Japan: **Punish, reconstruct, democratise**

Some programmes aimed at **converting Japan to 'US democratic ideals'**. The APs ruled Japan through the nation's existing political institutions, including the **emperor**

The occupation regime lasted **between 1945 and 1952**, until the San Francisco Treaty entered into force.

There was **no direct reference** to Japan's war responsibility. However, Tokyo rejected to pursue any military ambitions in Asia



An 'Appropriate' Picture



Part 4

Road to a Multilateral Organisation

How did the United Nations come to be established?

The League of Nations,
1920

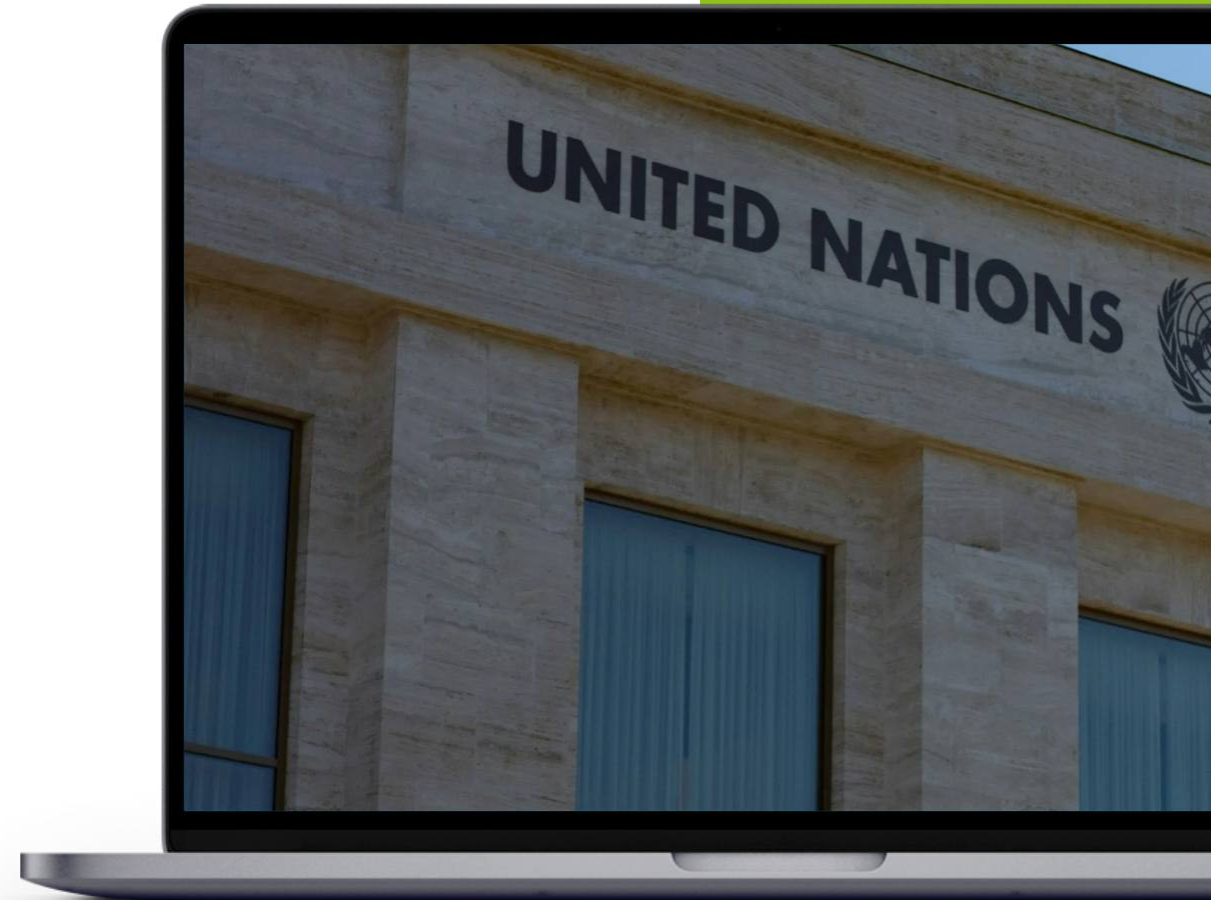
The Atlantic Charter,
1941

The declaration of the United Nations,
1942



A Brief History of An Idea

- Before the UN became a peacetime organisation, it was a **wartime alliance**
- Roosevelt's '**Four Policemen**' idea anticipated the UN Security Council
- **26 June 1945** > The San Francisco Charter
- The League bodies metamorphosed into better-funded UN entities (i.e. FAO, UNESCO)
- Three main bodies: **Security Council**, **General Assembly** and **Secretariat**
- The issue of China's representation on the UN Security Council



The Most Important Innovations of the San Francisco Charter

World Federalism

The UN should have strengthened to make it a world government

Collective security

Preventing threats, acts of aggression and other acts of breach of peace.

UN troops and peacekeeping operations

Art. 2, sec. 7: no intervention in matters which are essentially within the **domestic jurisdiction** of any state

Human Rights

Defining, codifying, and protecting human rights

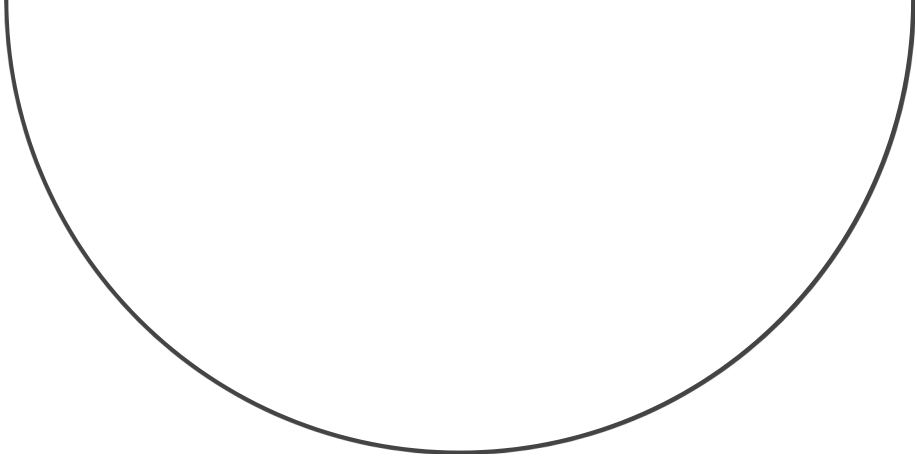
The UN convened just as the first pictorial evidence of the **Holocaust.**

The Universal Declaration on Human Rights, 1948 (Eleanor Roosevelt)



The Champion of Human Rights





Prompting for discussion

**Human rights became an important
component of foreign policy.**

**Still, how should a government
promote them abroad?**

