

**communism** A social and economic system which, according to Marx and Engels, should be based on the ownership, control and self-management of all major parts of an economy (land, industries, banks) by the whole of society, not just the wealthy capitalist classes. This classless society would be preceded by a socialist stage of development in which, for the first time since early human history, the ruling class would be the majority (i.e. working) class.

**capitalism** A social and economic system based on the private ownership of all major parts of an economy by a dominant or ruling minority class of individuals, families, companies and/or wealthy shareholders, who make all the important decisions concerning investment, production and employment. The state and society as a whole has no or very little say over such issues. Often also called a market or a free enterprise economy.

### **Military-Industrial Complex**

This refers to the top US military leaders (the Pentagon) and large US armaments companies. Some people, including Eisenhower, expressed concern that the M-I-C worked together to persuade US presidents that increased defence expenditure was vital to respond to the Soviet 'threat' when, in fact, it was not.

### **Fact**

Halliday suggests that the Second Cold War stemmed from the economic dominance of capitalist firms in California and those associated with the defence industry. He also links it with the rise of Christian fundamentalism and the New Right in the USA.

## **What were the main features of the Cold War?**

### **The main theories**

Historians have developed at least three major interpretations concerning the reasons for the Cold War. Not surprisingly, there are also multiple – often conflicting – assessments of its nature. The eight main theories are explained below.

#### **1 The Russian menace**

Many have seen the Cold War as essentially a series of crises and conflicts resulting from Russian expansionism and Soviet communism, which the 'free' West struggled to contain. Hence the actions taken by the US and its allies were merely defensive measures against the threat of Soviet tyranny.

#### **2 US imperialism**

Others have taken the opposite viewpoint. Instead of Moscow being the heart of an 'evil empire', the threat came from Washington, which was attempting to spread the evil of expansionist and predatory monopoly capitalism – and essentially US capitalism – in order to achieve global hegemony. This was not just over the 'communist' enemy, but also over its Western allies. Most significantly, the US was more than prepared to use military force to achieve its objectives, whether through invasion, the backing or instigation of coups, or training and arming 'terrorists'. In fact, such actions have been seen as essential to the '**Military-Industrial Complex**', which is said to need enemies and war in order to maintain high profitability in late capitalism.

#### **3 West-West conflict theory**

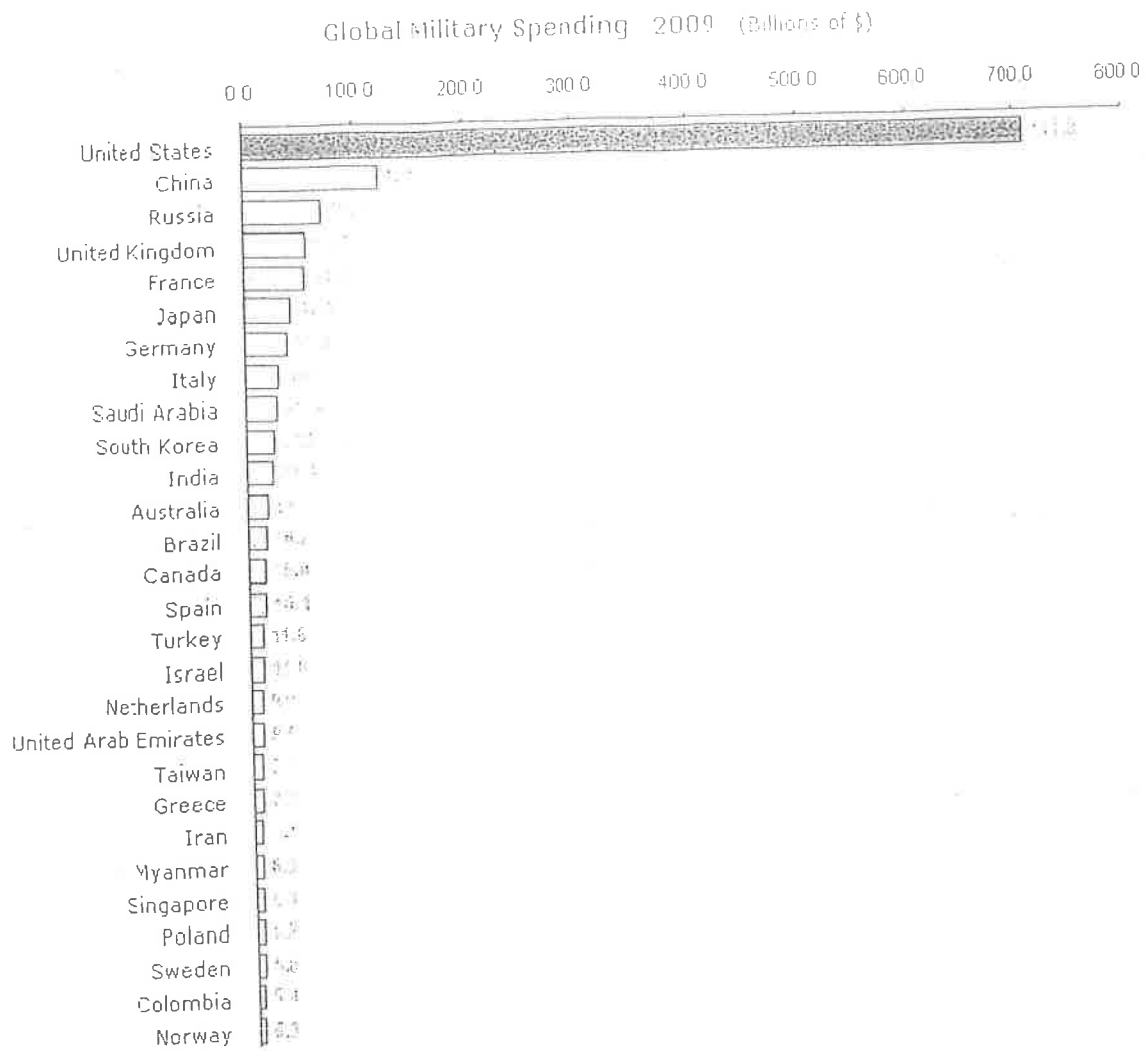
Some historians consider the Cold War to be a much more complex conflict, suggesting that it was essentially a smokescreen for the US while the country attempted to secure domination of the Western world. By placing the Soviet Union in the role of 'evil empire', the US sought to control developments both in Western Europe and in Japan and other parts of Asia. Arguably, this can be seen most notably during the Second Cold War (1979–85), a period that coincided with economic problems in the West and the rise of independent nationalist movements in the Developing World.

According to this view, the events of the Cold War were an extension of the inevitable competition and conflicts between rich capitalist states that had certainly led to the First World War, and possibly to the Second World War as well.

#### **4 Intra-state theory**

This theory, closely related to the West-West conflict theory, suggests that the Cold War was essentially the playing out on an international stage of developments in the internal domestic economies and social formations of the most important individual states. As such, the foreign policies of the USA and the USSR during the Cold War should be seen as attempts by politicians and – in the case of capitalist states – of groups of companies, to use international events as opportunities to resolve internal tensions and overcome competitors.

# Annual Military Budget of Countries Compared



## Costs of World War II: Allies and Axis

	Died War Casualties	Military Killed/Missing	Civilians Killed
USA	\$288.0 billion*	292,131**	-
Britain	\$117.0 billion	272,311	60,595
France	\$111.3 billion	205,707***	173,260†
USSR	\$93.0 billion	13,600,000	7,720,000
Germany	\$212.3 billion	3,300,000	2,893,000††
Japan	\$41.3 billion	1,140,429	953,000

dollars.

\*Additional 115,187 servicemen died in battle causes.

\*\*Surrender to Nazis.

†65,000 murdered Jews.

††about 170,000 murdered Jews and foreign civilians in Germany.

### SKILLBUILDER: Interpreting Charts

1. **Drawing Conclusions** Which of the nations listed in the chart suffered the greatest human costs?
2. **Comparing** How does U.S. spending on the war compare with the spending of Germany and Japan?

### PRIMARY SOURCE

Across Europe a wild tide of frantic survivors was flowing. . . . Many of them didn't really know where to go. . . . And yet the survivors continued their pilgrimage of despair. . . . "Perhaps someone is still alive. . . ." Someone might tell where to find a wife, a mother, children, a brother—or whether they were dead. . . . The desire to find one's people was stronger than hunger, thirst, fatigue.

SIMON WEISENTHAL, quoted in *Never to Forget: The Jews of the Holocaust*

**Misery Continues After the War** The misery in Europe continued for years after the war. The fighting had ravaged Europe's countryside, and agriculture had been completely disrupted. Most able-bodied men had served in the military, and the women had worked in war production. Few remained to plant the fields. With the transportation system destroyed, the meager harvests often did not reach the cities. Thousands died as famine and disease spread through the bombed-out cities. The first postwar winter brought more suffering as people went without shoes and coats.

### Postwar Governments and Politics

Despairing Europeans often blamed their leaders for the war and its aftermath. Once the Germans had lost, some prewar governments—like those in Belgium, Holland, Denmark, and Norway—returned quickly. In countries like Germany, Italy, and France, however, a return to the old leadership was not desirable. Hitler's Nazi government had brought Germany to ruins. Mussolini had led Italy to defeat. The Vichy government had collaborated with the Nazis. Much of the old leadership was in disgrace. Also, in Italy and France, many resistance fighters were communists. A)

After the war, the Communist Party promised change, and millions were ready to listen. In both France and Italy, Communist Party membership skyrocketed. The communists made huge gains in the first postwar elections. Anxious to speed up a political takeover, the communists staged a series of violent strikes. Alarmed French and Italians reacted by voting for anticommunist parties. Communist Party membership and influence began to decline. And they declined even more as the economies of France and Italy began to recover.