

## **To what extent did economic interest rather than ideology lead to the breakdown of the Grand alliance between 1943 and 1949?**

The Grand Alliance was the alliance made by the three countries' leaders during WW2 that joined together the US, the USSR, and Great Britain. Many historians suggest different reasons behind the breakdown of Grand alliance from 1943 to 1949 in terms of the relationship between Big Four, particularly with the US and USSR. This paper will cover the economic, ideology with the difference of personality, and fear and mistrust as the main factors behind the fall of the Grand Alliance.

The economic reconstruction of Europe was an important factor which contributed to lead the break of the Grand Alliance, as outlined by the Marshall Plan in 1948, the European Recovery Program. It caused the most prominent division of the ideologies between the US and the USSR, which consequently led to the Breakdown of the Great Alliance, and to the start of the Cold War. From Stalin's perspective, the Marshall Plan was a threat to his post-war plans since the USA would need to be a continued American presence in Europe which might lead to dollar imperialism. Truman's policies of containment evidently created suspicion and mistrust from the Soviet Union who viewed the US' new foreign policy as aggressive as well as using their economic influence for their own imperialist aims. The establishment of the Economic Cooperation Administration in 1948 deepened the conflict between US and USSR. It aimed to facilitate reconstruction therefore, the US government loaned money to create and reinvigorate the industry. Consequently, Europe experiences the growth which also created close trade relations between Marshall Plan countries and North America. As a response, the Soviet-created the COMECON which was to coordinate these economies based on the economic strength of each country and intellectual property under cooperation.

During the Cold war, there were the different ideologies of the US and the USSR, as supported by the Truman Doctrine in 1947, which created the separation between communism and capitalism, which led to the breakdown of the Grand Alliance. For instance, its attitude shifted from isolationism to interventionist which helped the Greeks and the Turks in their civil war against Communism and provided economic and military help to prevent them from falling into what they perceived as the Soviet sphere. To add on, the change of personality worsened the conflict between the US and USSR in terms of capitalism and communism as the US shifted into more interventionist. The different personalities between the leaders of the US and the USSR, as demonstrated by the Potsdam conference in 1945. President Roosevelt kept his neutral position in between three other big countries in order to solve post-war problems such as Germany and Poland peacefully and his attitude was

shown explicitly in Tehran conference in 1943 and Yalta Conference in 1945. After his death in 1945, new US president Truman caused a separation between the two countries that impacted on the ideologies and consequently on the breakdown of the Great Alliance. For instance, the Potsdam agreement was signed with what it showed the strain of the wartime alliance as the first event which showed the change of US attitude after Truman's presidency. Truman pursued the policy of Containment which attempted to stop Communism spreading. New leaders also meant that the decisions previously made weren't agreed on, such as for the USSR to take a part of Poland or the Eastern European boundaries. Atlee also replaced Churchill meaning that Stalin was the only original member remaining and believed he had the largest say at the Potsdam conference. The USA and UK were trying to exact guarantees from Stalin that Poland would be granted free elections, and that self-determination would be the rule in eastern Europe.

The spread of fear and mistrust was embedded within the Big Four especially US and USSR which caused the aggressive response to each other's political action. The Berlin blockade in 1948-49 is considered to be the first serious crisis of the Cold War, initiate from the currency conflict. It hastened the development of a West German state that was politically and militarily integrated to the Western anti-Soviet alliance. This highlights how Berlin was a controversial issue dividing the superpowers foreground that the fundamental issue of Berlin did not just contribute to the collapse of the Grand alliance but also become a dominant theme throughout the Cold War. Ideology, however, is once again present in Berlin as the conflicting ideologies of East and West explain how the powers were unable to reach agreements over Germany as the US feared a communist Germany and the Soviet's feared a capitalist Germany. It is disputable that if the ideological rivalry had been removed from the situation, whether Germany would have been such a controversial matter to the superpowers. Consequently, the creation of NATO was partly a response to Stalin's blockade of the American, British and French zones of Berlin, which lay within the Soviet zone of Germany. Moreover, the US established military bases in the NATO countries which the Soviet argued that it was an aggressive alliance directed against the USSR and eastern Europe, violating the principles of the Nation. For Truman, it was a defensive alliance to prevent aggression. The creation of NATO-led to the consolidation of two blocs in Europe and the Soviet responded with the creation of the Warsaw, a collective security agreement of its satellite states.

The US' atomic monopoly is another factor that must be taken into consideration when discussing the collapse of the Grand Alliance. The US' controversial decision to drop two atomic bombs in Japan which meant that an allied victory over Japan was inevitable, evidently provoked further suspicion and mistrust from the Soviet Union. It has been argued that the US' decision to drop

the atom bomb on Japan was provoked by the US' aim to assert nuclear superiority over the Soviet Union and to prevent the USSR from being able to claim power over Japan in the end negotiations, although this remains controversial, it is indisputable that the US' atomic monopoly not only broke down US-Soviet relations but also provoked the Soviet Union to develop their own atomic bomb in 1949, thus beginning the arms race that would grow throughout the Cold War as both East and West would compete for nuclear supremacy.

In conclusion, the most prominent reason for the breakdown of the Great Alliance was the difference in ideology between the two great powers and their personalities, even though this was part of a multilayer of causes that include the world's economy, and the difference in personalities. The Marshall Plan, with the intent of stopping communism, led to Dollar imperialism, while the Potsdam conference, from Truman's point of view, was to intimidate Stalin, in reality only made him more paranoid and destroyed Roosevelt's plans of friendship with Russia. Similarly, even though the Truman Doctrine was created with the purpose of stopping rapid spread of communism, leads to the expansion of the cold war and reaches its peak with the Berlin Blockade. Therefore, the difference of ideology majorly leads to the breakdown of the Grand alliance but along with the economic factor and fear and mistrust.