

Two months after George Kennan's "X" article was published, Politburo member and Leningrad party boss Andrei Zhdanov issued a report to the first conference of Cominform, the international communist information bureau. In the report, Zhdanov stresses -- much like Kennan did in his article -- the ideological differences between the Soviet Union and the United States. Zhdanov also discusses the need to contain "the imperialist camp."

Report on the International Situation to the Cominform

Andrei Zhdanov, September 22, 1947

The fundamental changes caused by the war on the international scene and in the position of individual countries has entirely changed the political landscape of the world. A new alignment of political forces has arisen. The more the war recedes into the past, the more distinct becomes two major trends in postwar international policy, corresponding to the division of the political forces operating on the international arena into two major camps: the imperialist and anti-democratic camp, on the one hand, and the anti-imperialist and democratic camp, on the other. The principal driving force of the imperialist camp is the U.S.A. Allied with it are Great Britain and France. ... The imperialist camp is also supported by colony-owning countries, such as Belgium and Holland, by countries with reactionary anti-democratic regimes, such as Turkey and Greece, and by countries politically and economically dependent upon the United States, such as the Near Eastern and South American countries and China.

The cardinal purpose of the imperialist camp is to strengthen imperialism, to hatch a new imperialist war, to combat socialism and democracy, and to support reactionary and anti-democratic pro-fascist regimes and movements everywhere.

In the pursuit of these ends the imperialist camp is prepared to rely on reactionary and anti-democratic forces in all countries, and to support its former adversaries in the war against its wartime allies.

The anti-fascist forces comprise the second camp. This camp is based on the U.S.S.R. and the new democracies. It also includes countries that have broken with imperialism and have firmly set foot on the path of democratic development, such as Rumania, Hungary and Finland. Indonesia and Vietnam are associated with it; it has the sympathy of India, Egypt and Syria. The anti-imperialist camp is backed by the labor and democratic movement and by the fraternal Communist parties in all countries, by the fighters for national liberation in the colonies and dependencies, by all progressive and democratic forces in every country. The purpose of this camp is to resist the threat of new wars and imperialist expansion, to strengthen democracy and to extirpate the vestiges of fascism.

The end of the Second World War confronted all the freedom-loving nations with the cardinal task of securing a lasting democratic peace sealing victory over fascism. In the accomplishment of this fundamental task of the postwar period the Soviet Union and its foreign policy are playing a leading role. This follows from the very nature of the Soviet socialist state, to which motives of aggression and exploitation are utterly alien, and which is interested in

creating the most favorable conditions for the building of a communist society. One of these conditions is external peace. As embodiment of a new and superior social system, the Soviet Union reflects in its foreign policy the aspirations of progressive mankind, which desires lasting peace and has nothing to gain from a new war hatched by capitalism. The Soviet Union is a staunch champion of liberty and independence of all nations, and a foe of national and racial oppression and colonial exploitation in any shape or form. The change in the general alignment of forces between the capitalist world and the socialist world brought about by the war has still further enhanced the significance of the foreign policy of the Soviet state and enlarged the scope of its activity on the international arena.

The successes and the growing international prestige of the democratic camp were not to the liking of the imperialists. Even while World War II was still on, reactionary forces in Great Britain and the United States became increasingly active, striving to prevent concerted action by the Allied powers, to protract the war, to bleed the U.S.S.R., and to save the fascist aggressors from utter defeat. The sabotage of the Second Front by the Anglo-Saxon imperialists, headed by Churchill, was a clear reflection of this tendency, which was in point of fact a continuation of the Munich policy in the new and changed conditions. But while the war was still in progress British and American reactionary circles did not venture to come out openly against the Soviet Union and the democratic countries, realizing that they had the undivided sympathy of the masses all over the world. But in the concluding months of the war the situation began to change. The British and American imperialists already manifested their willingness to respect the legitimate interests of the Soviet Union and the democratic countries at the Potsdam tripartite conference in July 1945.

The foreign policy of the Soviet Union and the democratic countries in these two past years has been a policy of consistently working for the observance of the democratic principles in the postwar settlement. The countries of the anti-imperialist camp have loyally and consistently striven for the implementation of these principles, without deviating from them one iota. Consequently, the major objective of the postwar foreign policy of the democratic states has been a democratic peace, the eradication of the vestiges of fascism and the prevention of a resurgence of fascist imperialist aggression, the recognition of the principle of the equality of nations and respect for their sovereignty, and general reduction of all armaments and the outlawing of the most destructive weapons, those designed for the mass slaughter of the civilian population. ...

Of immense importance are the joint efforts of the diplomacy of the U.S.S.R. and that of the other democratic countries to secure a reduction of armaments and the outlawing of the most destructive of them -- the atomic bomb.

Soviet foreign policy proceeds from the fact of the coexistence for a long period of the two systems -- capitalism and socialism. From this it follows that cooperation between the U.S.S.R. and countries with other systems is possible, provided that the principle of reciprocity is observed and that obligations once assumed are honored. Everyone knows that the U.S.S.R. has always honored the obligations it has assumed. The Soviet Union has demonstrated its will and desire for cooperation.