

The cold war, a period of conflict between the differing ideologies of capitalism and communism, was a long history of war by proxy, propaganda, spying, brinkmanship and all other passive-aggressive forms of attack without any actual open warfare. The definition is clear, but there are a lot of nuances of the war that are traditionally argued. For example, it has been stated that the Truman Doctrine of 1947 is considered by some historians to mark the beginning of the cold war. While the statement is partially true in that it is one cause of the war, it is not the definitive cause. It will be shown by looking at the social and political aspects of the USSR and Europe in general that the war has a long and intrinsic history preceding it and thus the aforementioned topic statement cannot be definite.

The cold war, somewhat contrary to what the topic statement implies, did not start overnight. It had deep roots imbedded in the political events and policies of Europe. A main benefactor to the start of the Cold War was undoubtedly the mistrust between the East and the West; this sort of mistrust serves as an overarching causality for the entirety of the war. The evidence begins with communism; in 1917 Vladimir Lenin came to power in Russia and with him, communism in the USSR was born. He was a traditional and typical communist who believed capitalism was a prominent hostile threat. His rise to power, however, was a tough pill to swallow for the Russian people. Whilst a lot of them did like his promise of working class liberation from capitalism, many of the Russians were not fond of Lenin taking over the traditional and familiar government and thus, in that same year, the Russians decided to revolt. The revolution was problematic for Russia, posing as a big interference in every aspect, and so they stepped out of World War 1 (WWI) to deal with the situation. This was when trust issues, suspicion, and general rivalry began to rise in countries allied to Russia. The West felt abandoned by Russia for ceasing activity in the war, and ultimately saw communism as a prime suspect. Furthering the conflict between the two sides, The USA took it upon themselves to actively, yet not admittedly, oppose communism by fighting with the “white” side of the civil war in Russia, against the communist “reds”. What came of this was a rivalry between the West and the East that began to ingrain and stay for years to come. Ultimately, it was Lenin’s coming to power and introducing communism in 1917 that marked a crucial starting point in the Cold War.

Another argument to be made regards the events during World War 2 (WWII). During this time, the Germans had attacked Russia despite signing a non-aggression pact with them. Needless to say this aggravated the Russians and their leader Stalin to an extreme degree. To make matters worse, the West delayed opening a second front in 1941 when Germany attacked Russia. As a result of this, Russia lost a lot of troops and resources and blamed that entirely on the West. In addition to the deliberate mistrust the West has caused, the USA also did not inform Russia of their plans to drop an atomic bomb on Japan, despite having a perfect opportunity to do so at the Yalta conference. This was an obvious sign of mistrust, exclusion and, in some ways, betrayal. It wasn’t until the Potsdam conference, once all this hatred for the West and Capitalism had compounded, that Stalin really began kindling the flame of the Cold War. It was this constant back and forth rivalry between the East and the

West that really built up to the Cold War. Couple Stalin's hatred for the West in general with the fact that Stalin also hated capitalism and wanted to develop communism and it became clear why the Cold War started long before the doctrine, based entirely on this rivalry and mistrust alone.

In any case, the implementation of the Truman Doctrine is not an event that can be glossed over in cold war history. It has been considered by many, even Stalin himself, as the first real hostile shot fired towards communism and thus it was a major turning point in the Cold War. By publicly stating that he would support foreign countries under the threat of soviet forces with financial aid, Harry Truman essentially declared communism an enemy of the USA. It was the first public announcement that capitalism will openly fight against communism, and to Stalin, this meant war. Without a doubt, this event was a large deciding factor between war and peace, and its occurrence was clearly indicative that it played a large role in the cause of the Cold War.

In conclusion, yes, the Truman Doctrine was one aspect that caused the Cold War, but it was one of many. The overarching reason behind the origins of the war was the mistrust and rivalry between the East and West in 1917 starting long before the Truman Doctrine and further augmented by variables such as Stalin's hatred for capitalism and desire to develop communism. This proves that there was not one factor or event that was an immediate and definite cause of the Cold War, but rather many aforementioned events and political agendas from both the East and West with a long history that built up to the events of the war.