Structure, Strife, and Instability

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Planting the Flag

• Three elements of Post-WWII US Foreign policy
  • Structure
  • Strife
  • Stability
Structure

- The world is divided up into two systems
  - “irreconcilable differences”
- The Situation after World War II
  - Kennan Letter from “Mr. X”
  - Truman Doctrine: aid anti-communists (Greece, Korea, Latin America, Iran, Laos)
- John Foster Dulles --> containment
Structure II

• 1947 National Security Act
  • No tradition of peacetime military (well...)
  • Establishes the DoD, CIA

• North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO)
  • Bulwark of U.S. containment strategy
  • Resurrect Germany, Japan
Strife

- Cold War
  - Nuclear Stalemate
  - Proxy wars
  - Economic competition
  - “Soft power” strategies
Strife

- Parallels between Vietnam and Iraq
  - Grand strategy
  - Strategy
  - Tactics
  - Differences
  - Iraq is “last war of Cold War”
• Strife II

• Detente
  • Nixon’s grand strategy (Kissinger)
  • Defuse proxy wars (Middle East / Vietnam)
  • Open up to Russia
  • Open up to China
  • Play each off against the other
Policy Ebb and Flow

• US policy in the Cold War is basically static
  • But varies by administration
    • Variation driven more by personality and circumstances than by partisanship
    • Reagan Doctrine = Truman Doctrine
    • Nixon more moderate than Kennedy
    • Carter Doctrine extends US into M. East
Stability

• Strategic Cold War “triangle”
  • USSR / US / China
  • Nixon (Kissinger) upsets the triangle
  • Sino-US rapprochement threatens USSR
    • Soviets consider more desperate options
      • War with the United States
      • Radical reduction of Cold War tensions
Stability

• End of the Cold War
  • Economic (Command economy is inefficient, Soviet defense spending 33% of GDP)
  • Political (Stress of military competition is a “wedge,” choice between moderate hard line)
• Andropov faction wins, then loses (dies)
• Gorbachev: perestroika, glasnost.