

The Cold War – How it all started. Part One

1939 – 1945:

- **Lessons from WW2.**
 - How Germany and Japan conquered the world:
 - Germany defeated France in six weeks!
 - Japan controlled major parts of east and Southeast Asia.
 - Great Britain got more and more dependent on the Commonwealth and on the USA.
 - Holocaust became a horrible reminder on what horrible things one regime can cause. Genocide became a new word in international politics.
 - The Soviet victory over Germany on the eastern front meant a tremendous triumph for the Soviet state. It also meant that the Red Army was holding a firm grip on Europe.
 - The Japanese had conquered the French and British colonies and kicked out the USA from the Philippines.
 - The French and the British wants to keep their colonies and the Americans wants free, democratic countries after the war.
- **When Germany and Japan was defeated it meant that the world would never be the same again:**
 - The Grand Alliance between the British, the Americans and the Russians had defeated Germany and Japan. In the words of Elvis “What now, my love?”.
 - A horrible Genocide had taken place, how should the world cope with that? The UN will be the answer.
 - The USA wanted all liberated countries to be free democratic countries, the British and the French wanted to keep their colonies and the USSR wanted to have a “buffert-zone” as protection against future aggressions.
 - It is nothing new that countries change strategies after a major conflict, it also not new that alliances stand during the conflict but falls after the end of it.
 - Territory = power. Both Stalin and Churchill saw this as an absolute truth. Churchill wanted to preserve the British Empire and Stalin wanted to gain back the Czarist Russian borders of pre-1914. Roosevelt was more of an idealist and a true believer in free democratic countries.
 - This is why it is Churchill who wants the American army to move onwards Berlin and Prague and Roosevelt who wants them to halt and honor the agreement with the Americans.

- **It is wrong to say that the Cold war started with an alliance between the British and the Americans against the USSR. It was three countries that agreed and disagreed on many different issues. The British and the Americans agreed on some issues and strongly disagreed on other.**
 - For Roosevelt and the Americans it was obvious that Stalin would be a much more important international politician than Churchill after the war, and they tried to please Stalin and give in to his demands. Churchill also understood the importance that the USSR would play after the war and agreed on Stalin's demands of a "protective-zone". It was all about dividing the world into "spheres of interest". Churchill wanted the Soviet part to be as little as possible and the British to be as big as possible.
 - The Americans were Anti-imperialistic, strongly supporting India's independence, and Churchill was a strong believer in the Empire.
 - This meant that Stalin could sit and wait for the best offers.

1945, The year of the conferences:

- **The Yalta Conference February 4 – 11 1945 (Roosevelt, Stalin and Churchill):**
 - One of the longest toughest myths in history is that it was at this conference that the three leaders met to divide the world.
 - They did no such thing. Neither Germany nor Japan was defeated.
 - It was of outermost importance that the Grand Alliance would hold. Hitler was still hoping for it to break down.
 - The conference was about four things:
 - How to organize UN.
 - How to come to an agreement on a common policy against Germany in concern of reparations and occupying zones.
 - How to deal with Polish borders and government.
 - On what terms and when the USSR would join the war against Japan.
 - The result of the Yalta conference:
 - The UN: Members should be the countries at war with Germany and Veto should be given to members of the Security Council. Stalin gave in to American demands (originally Stalin wanted all the Soviet Republics to be members but agree only that Russia, Byelorussia and Ukraine would be members).
 - Germany:
 - In Casablanca January 1943 GB and USA agreed on unconditional surrender from Italy, Germany and Japan. No separate peaces should be made. Stalin joined this immediately.
 - East Prussia and the city of Königsberg should be annexed by the USSR.
 - The border to Poland was to be along the rivers Oder and Neisse (not mentioning if it was West or East Neisse).
 - Germany should be divided into occupying zones, GB insisted on that France would be given one zone.
 - Reparations were agreed on. Stalin wanted it in natura at a value of 20 billion USD of which half would go to the USSR. The British and the Americans opposed this claiming that the lesson from the Versailles Peace Treaty must be learned. USA and USSR agreed on postponing the question and putting together a committee that should meet in Moscow and discuss the issue, with the figure 20 billion as a base for the

discussion. A big step towards accepting the Russian demands were met.

- Poland:
 - The eastern border was set along the Curzon Line, leaving the western to be decided at Potsdam.
 - In Lublin Stalin had set up a Soviet controlled government and in London the Exile government was sitting, ready to take over. The result became a compromise. The two governments should cooperate and be “Friendly to the Soviet Union”. The Lublin government were given the most power, they should form a provisional government and hold free election, taking into consideration the desires of “polish abroad”.
- Japan:
 - Roosevelt wanted to make sure that the Russians would join the war against Japan. The simple reason was that without the help of USSR the war would be long, bloody and expensive.
 - In order to get the USSR involved he paid with land.
 - Manchuria was recognized as Chinese territory but USSR would control the railway, and Outer Mongolia was to be an independent state, but under Soviet influence. USA sold out its ally China.
 - USSR agreed to join the war three months after the German surrender.
- Declaration on Liberated Europe:
 - The Three agreed on that free elections should be held in Europe.
- Future problems and unsolved issues:
 - Churchill was dismayed at the idea that Stalin had got too much influence over Europe.
 - Roosevelt had spoken beautifully of free elections and liberated Europe, but had sold out China, given in on reparations and not solved the future government of Poland.
 - Stalin didn't trust his allies and was afraid of a separate peace.
- BUT the Grand Alliance was still standing. Compromises always take place at conferences and this was no exception.
- So the World was not divided, not even Europe was divided. Poland was definitively put in the Communist sphere. But the Grand Alliance survived and nobody anticipated the coming of a Cold War.