



## Mains Practice Question

**Q.** The Cold War was a state of geopolitical tension after World War II between powers in the Eastern Bloc (the Soviet Union and its satellite states) and powers in the Western Bloc (the United States, its NATO allies and others). Comment. (250 words)

04 May, 2019 GS Paper 1 History

### Approach:

- Introduce the answer by citing characteristics of cold war, post WW II
- Comment how the Cold War was a manifestation of geopolitical tension between the two blocs.
- Discuss its impact in various dimensions.

### Introduction:

- The Cold War was an open yet restricted rivalry after WW II between the Eastern bloc (led by Communist Soviet Union) and the Western bloc (Capitalist West led by the US).
- It was a state of mutual hostility, distrust and rivalry between the two blocs. Competing political and economic ideologies defined the contours of the Cold War.

### Body:

- **Capitalist West** was usually represented by popularly elected, multiparty governments with individual rights and free-market economy.
- **Communist East** advocated control by a single political party over individual rights and political participation with a highly regulated economy, shunning private property and emphasizing collective collaboration.
- The geopolitical tensions **lasted for over four decades** and saw at least three major hot wars: **Korean War (1950-1953), the Vietnam War (1946-1975)** and the **war in Afghanistan (1979-1989)**.
- The tension was as much a fight over ideas and principles as over **military supremacy** (made worse by **nuclear competition**).
- The USSR after the WWII envisioned spreading Communism (authoritarian, one-party rule, government-controlled economy) in various countries and regarded Capitalism as the enemy.
- The Western nations viewed the Communist ideology negatively as they believed that the future belonged to multi-party, democratic capitalism.
- The geopolitical tension led to **military and space race** between the blocs and a number of **proxy wars**.

### Conclusion:

The struggle between the two camps led to a Cold War which unlike a conventional war lasted for over four decades, worsening economy, growth and life for humanity as the opposing camps fought for geostrategic influence in various continents.

