

# THE COLD WAR

## THE NATURE OF INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

- Security / self-preservation; the protection of a state's territorial integrity. Note: the Russian word for security - bezopasnost - does not have a direct English translation. In Russian, it amounts to complete or total security.
- Sovereignty - means independence; a nation's right to make its own decisions. The key aspect of international relations becomes national self-interest. The power needed to protect a nation's self-interest (its security and sovereignty) can be applied to the politics of international relations:
  1. Militarily ... through the use of threat or force. Note that threat, in a highly refined state, has become one of the key aspects of US/Soviet relations. That is to say that threat, rather than use, has been a vital part of nuclear strategy from massive retaliation to flexible response to Mutually Assured Destruction (MAD), etc.
  2. Economically ... through trade pressures, boycotts and sanctions. Most Favoured Nation (MFN) status has been an important bargaining chip between the superpowers.
- The climate of relations between the US and the USSR changed drastically over the period –
  - Wartime alliance
  - Cold war
  - Oscillating hostility
  - Second Cold War
  - Post-Second Cold War
- Throughout this time, however, there have been a number of relative constraints:
  1. Mutual fear and suspicion
  2. A tendency on both sides to view events from 'worst case scenarios'
  3. Technology creep in the arms race: a bid to develop weapons that will give one side a measure of superiority
  4. Fear of nuclear proliferation
  5. The need to reconcile the ability to use nuclear weapons with tight control