



## Origins of The Cold War

*Domestic concerns VS Foreign policy*

### **Christian Bailey:**

You suggested there in many ways that domestic concerns were perhaps more important for European integration and for why the nations integrated themselves rather than foreign policy. It's my impression that historians of the Cold War tend to focus more on the opposite dimension- on how foreign policy shaped domestic policy. I wonder if you could say a little more about how various domestic contexts helped to shape the Cold War, whether this would help give us a fresh perspective on viewing these years and this phenomenon..

### **Professor Anne Deighton:**

Yes this is a very interesting idea which is now being looked at by historians and by scholars of international relations, and that is really whether the domestic environment shapes your foreign policy. That is to say, if you have a foul dictatorship at home, you'll follow foul dictator policies overseas and if you have a very peace-loving domestic policy, then you won't want to make war overseas. That's one way of looking at the world, the other is that what really matters in the harsh, realistic world is power, state against state, and therefore states will always seek to maximise their own power in the international system and the internal, domestic politics are a residual phenomenon from what is going on in the foreign policy domain.

My own view is that the former approach is more helpful, that is to say what goes on inside a state does help us to understand what goes on in its foreign policy. Let me give you one obvious example, the experience of West Germany - a country created out of nothing in 1949, was not to try to repeat the kind of experiences that had dominated its life in the period leading up to the First World War and Second World War. The Primat Der Politic , the importance of domestic politics, of giving welfare rights of creating a sound capitalist economy at home was far more important to West Germans than any ideas of expansion or territorial gain. And that is extraordinarily important and it leads West Germany in a very sensitive, delicate position on certain foreign policy issues. For example, the West Germans were never really able to take a position on the Arab-Israeli dispute for very obvious reasons with their own experience of barbaric mistreatment of Jewish peoples during the Second World War. Another example is France and Britain, for whom their major source of foreign policy had been their empires. And during this period of the Cold War, of European integration, we also have this great force of the ending of empires. The impact of losing an empire is very

powerful, it's now quite often called hubris - that we think we're bigger than we are. We think that we're playing above our rank and that's because of our imperial past. That has played into our domestic politics and what people expect from a country like Britain or France in the international system.

**Christian Bailey:**

I think de-colonisation is a very interesting example of how the domestic and the international fit together or perhaps don't fit together.