

Ariel Bohr  
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AP European History  
Period 1

*"Repeatedly in the course of modern European history a single state has threatened the balance of power; these threats have been met by coalitions of powers which have dissolved when the threats were contained."*

Discuss this statement with regard to France under Louis XIV and the Soviet Union under Stalin, and show how it would apply in each case. (AP Question #5, 1975)

The idea of the balance or disruption of power was developed in the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> centuries. Alliances were made and broken just as quickly. Louis XIV was a challenge to the balance of power because he believed in universal monarchy, which is quite the opposite. Louis XIV attempted to control all of Europe by spreading French language and culture throughout the continent as well as expanding the borders of France itself. He would continuously be fighting wars to gain more land for the benefit of his absolute power. King Louis XIV even controlled the religion of his people, to an extent, when he revoked the Edict of Nantes and took away the Protestants' rights to worship. Joseph Stalin was similar to Louis XIV in that he was a dictator with totalitarian ideas, similar to those of Louis XIV on Universal Monarchy. At one point, Stalin was in control of almost all of Eastern Europe after World War II. The United States tried to take control the U.S.S.R., as well as the spread of communism, by creating NATO, which the Soviets countered with the Warsaw Pact. Some of the similarities in the balance of power, or lack there of, during the reigns of Louis XIV and Stalin are subtle, but there are also glaringly obvious ones such as the hunger for land and control of other countries through military aggression.

## I. Balance of Power

### A. The Idea of the Balance of Power

#### 1. Three "senses" of balance

- a. The first sense is one of equilibrium of power among many separate states.
  - b. The second sense is the disruption of this equilibrium by one power, as in the case of Louis XIV
  - c. The third sense is the "controlling" of this balance of power. This sense usually refers to a state that keeps all others in a state of equilibrium.
2. Palmer defines the balance of power as "a system in which each state tends to throw its weight where it is most needed, so that its own importance may be enhanced."
  3. The basic rule under the balance of power was for smaller states was to ally against any other state threatening to disrupt the balance.

### B. Aims of the Balance of Power

1. The main purpose of the balance of power was to preserve the independence of each state as much as possible, not to preserve peace.
2. This system was effective because there were a great number of states capable of pursuing foreign policy.
3. Because of this capability, numerous alliances were formed and broken up just as quickly to deal with the situations at hand.

## II. France under Louis XIV

### A. Background information

1. Louis XIV came to the throne in 1643 at the age of 5
  - a. He did not assume personal direction of France until 1661 when he was 23.
  - b. Until 1661 Cardinal Mazarin was the regent to the throne
2. He ruled over France for 72 years and made France the strongest country in Europe during his reign.
3. The idea of absolute or universal monarchy is usually associated with Louis XIV because he believed in a sovereign state
  - a. In a sovereign state, the ruler possesses a monopoly over the administration of justice and the use of force.
  - b. Palmer defines universal monarchy as "a political situation in which one state might subordinate all others to its will."
4. To obtain universal monarchy, Louis XIV wanted to expand the borders of France.
  - a. He wanted to push the boundary eastward to the Rhine and annex the Netherlands and Burgundy.
  - b. He also hoped to obtain the Spanish inheritance of Charles II
5. Louis XIV was probably opposed to a parliamentary government because of the Fronde, which happened when he was still a child. The Fronde was a movement of the nobles to overthrow Cardinal Mazarin.

### B. Wars of Louis XIV

1. The "War of Devolution" (1667)
  - a. His goal in this war was to expand into the Spanish Netherlands and Franche-Comte.
  - b. He was blocked by the Dutch, who were allied with Sweden and England in the Triple Alliance.
2. The Dutch War (1672-1678)
  - a. Louis XIV invaded again in 1672, but this time he had the support of Charles II of England.
  - b. This time he invaded the Dutch provinces on the lower Rhine, but he was met by William III, Prince of Orange.
  - c. William III formed another alliance with the Austrian and Spanish Hapsburgs, Brandenburg, and Denmark.

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- d. Louis XIV was forced to sign the treaty of Nimwegen in 1678, but he received the Franche-Comte.
- 3. The War of the League of Augsburg (1688-1697)
  - a. Emperor Leopold of Spain gathered together with Catholic powers and Protestant enemies of Louis XIV to form the League of Augsburg in 1686. The Holy Roman Emperor, the king of Sweden, the electors of Bavaria, Saxony, and the Palatinate, and the Dutch Republic were also members of the league.
    - 1. In 1689, when William III became the king of England, they joined the League as well.
  - b. The French armies won many battles but could not manage to fight so many different enemies.
  - c. Louis XIV finally made peace at Ryswick in the Netherlands. The Peace of Ryswick (1697) left matters almost the same as they had been before the war.
- 4. The War of the Spanish Succession (1702-1713)
  - a. Charles II, the imbecile Hapsburg ruler of Spain, died in 1700 and left the Spanish Empire to Louis XIV in his will.
  - b. This was a great upset in the balance of power and William III once again stepped in to solve the problem.
  - c. The Prince of Orange formed a coalition against Louis XIV in 1701 called the Grand Alliance. It included England, Holland, Holy Roman Empire, Brandenburg, Portugal, and the Italian Duchy of Savoy.
  - d. Louis XIV's only allies were Spain and Bavaria, but he still marched into war.
  - e. Eventually Louis asked for peace, but he would not agree to the allies' terms.
- 5. The Peace of Utrecht
  - a. Peace finally came with the treaties of Utrecht and Rastadt of 1713 and 1714.
  - b. The main accomplishment of the treaties was the partitioning of Spain.
    - 1. England benefited most from these treaties; it received Gibraltar and annexed the island of Minorca along with maintaining control of the Mediterranean sea.
    - 2. Louis XIV got to keep Franche-Comte and Alsace.

### III. U.S.S.R under Stalin

#### A. Background information

- 1. Stalin joined the Bolsheviks by 1903.
- 2. In 1922, he was named general secretary of the party's Central Committee. He was also recognized as the commissar of

Nationalities, a key position in which he governed many of the minorities in the vast Soviet Union.

3. Stalin became the head of the Bolsheviks after Stalin died in 1924.
4. He instituted the first five-year plan in 1928 in order to increase total industrial output and increase agricultural production.

#### B. World War II

1. On August 23, 1939, the Nazis and the Soviets signed a nonaggression pact, only to welcome war 8 days later when the Germans invaded Poland.
  - a. The pact stated that the U.S.S.R. would not go to war with Germany and that the two powers would divide up Poland.
2. In accordance to their pact, the Soviet Union moved into the eastern half of Poland two weeks after Germany invaded.
3. The Soviets also tried to establish fortified bases in the Baltic states of Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, and Finland, but Finland resisted.
  - a. Finland received sympathy from England and France and the U.S.S.R. was expelled from the league of nations for this aggressive act.
4. Hitler did not want the Soviets to influence the Balkans, so he persuaded Romania, Bulgaria, and Hungary to join the Axis.
5. Meanwhile, in 1941, the United States and Britain adopted the Lend-Lease Act. This policy provided arms, raw materials, and food to powers fighting the Axis.
6. After the battle of Britain from 1940-41, Hitler decided that he needed to rid himself of the U.S.S.R. to gain control of Eastern Europe.
  - a. While the Germans were occupied with the war, Russia had converted the three Baltic states into member republics of the U.S.S.R.
7. On June 22, 1941, Hitler caught Stalin by surprise and invaded Russia with an army of over 3 million men.
  - a. By autumn of 1941, the Nazi forces had overrun Byelorussia and the majority of the Ukraine, and Leningrad was in a state of siege.
  - b. The Germans, only 25 miles from Moscow believed themselves to be victorious.
  - c. Hitler had forgotten to take into account the last minute Soviet resistance that Stalin had scraped up and the advancing Russian winter.
  - d. The Germans shifted their focus to the south and devised a counterattack in the summer of 1942 directed toward Caucasus.
  - e. Hitler soon realized that this war would not pass by as

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quickly as he had anticipated and he took steps to mobilize the German economy on a full wartime basis.

f. The Russians continued to fight and they had not yet been struck in a vital spot concerning their economy or government.

g. The main downfall of the Germans came at Stalingrad.

i) In August of 1942, massive German forces invaded Stalingrad and by September they had invaded the city itself.

ii) Stalin demanded that Stalingrad be protected at all costs.

iii) The Germans had almost gained control of the city when they were met by a powerful counterattack led by General Zhukov.

iv) The Germans were left with fewer than 100,000 men when they surrendered in February of 1943.

8. The Lend-Lease Act was now extended to the Russians because they were now at war with the Axis.

9. During this time, the Big Three, Stalin, Roosevelt, and Churchill had convened on many occasions to discuss the fate of Germany after the conclusion of the war.

a. In August, 1941, Roosevelt and Churchill created the Atlantic charter. This charter stated that England and the United States would fight for four main freedoms for their countries: freedom of worship, freedom of speech, freedom from want, and freedom from fear.

b. Roosevelt and Churchill met again at Casablanca in January of 1943 and came to the conclusion that they would accept nothing less than "unconditional surrender" from the Axis powers.

c. In December, 1943, the Big Three met and discussed the postwar occupation and demilitarization of Germany.

i) Stalin insisted on a second front to be created in the west and promised that he would attack in the east if this front was created.

ii) It was also decided that the invasion of France would take place in spring of 1944.

d. The Yalta meeting took place in February, 1945. It was agreed that Germany would be divided into zones of occupation and reparation amounts were set. Stalin agreed to declare war on Japan after Germany was defeated. Also, it was decided that the United Nations would be formed.

e. The postwar Potsdam conference occurred in July of 1945. This time it wasn't the Big Three who met because Roosevelt had died and he was succeeded by

Truman and Churchill was replaced by Atlee. There were disagreements between the Western Allies and the Soviets that were finally surfacing. There were different opinions about Soviet control of Poland, Eastern Europe, and the Balkans as well as disagreements about German reparations.

### **C. Results of World War II**

- 1. After the war, the Soviet Union now controlled every major capital in Eastern and Central Europe.**
- 2. As decided at Yalta in 1945, the Allies created the United Nations. It was designed to "maintain international peace and security and encourage cooperation in solving international social, economic, and cultural problems."**
  - a. There were five Great Powers in the Security Council: the United States, the U.S.S.R., Great Britain, France, and China; and ten rotating members replaced every 2 years.**
  - b. Each Great Power had a veto and the Security Council could only act on important decisions if the vote was unanimous.**
  - c. Unfortunately, the United Nations was not very effective. The two super powers, U.S.S.R. and the United States, were drifting farther and farther apart.**
- 3. The Allies were worried about the balance of power being disrupted by Russia because they had received so much land after the war. To resolve this problem, the Truman Doctrine was created in March of 1947.**
  - a. The Truman Doctrine was made to control communism, to an extent, and "to assist free peoples who are resisting attempted subjugation by armed minorities or by outside pressures."**
- 4. After Japan was defeated, the U.S. had suggested that troops occupy Korea.**
  - a. The U.S. would have troops in South Korea, and the U.S.S.R. in North Korea with the dividing line being the 38<sup>th</sup> parallel.**
    - 1. The U.S.S.R. helped North Korea to build up a strong and well-equipped army.**
  - b. In May 1948, the U.S. and U.S.S.R. withdrew troops**
  - c. In June of 1950, North Korea invaded South Korea and war began.**
  - d. North Koreans expected a fast war, but America came in on the side of South Korea.**
    - 1. Truman assumed that Stalin had incited the attack. While the Soviets were criticizing the U.S. for intervening, they were furnishing North**



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Korea with military aid.

- e. In late October, Chinese soldiers appeared and started to win back territory that the UN soldiers had gained.
  - f. The battle lines seesawed until July of 1951 when a cease-fire agreement was signed.
  - g. In 1953, an armistice was signed and the line of partition was drawn roughly where it had been before.
  - h. North Korea became a Communist state and an ally of the Soviet Union.
5. The Truman Doctrine was quickly followed by the Marshall plan, another instrument in lessening the power of the U.S.S.R.
- a. The Marshall plan was a plan for economic reform and reconstruction in Europe.
6. Britain, France, Belgium, the Netherlands, and Luxembourg had formed a West European Union for collective self-defense in 1948, but the United States took it one step further and created a military alliance and a collective security system in 1949.
- a. The Atlantic pact came from this and was signed by the United States, Canada, and 10 European nations.
  - b. "an armed attack against one" was considered to be "an attack against all."
7. Out of this pact came the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), which included a network of military arrangements
- a. The purpose of NATO is to "safeguard the freedom and security of all its members by political and military means in accordance with the principles of the United Nations Charter."
8. The Soviet Union opposed NATO with the Warsaw Pact.
- a. The Warsaw pact, also called the Iron Curtain, was a coalition of communist countries created in 1955.
  - b. The Warsaw pact was beneficial to the Soviets because it allowed them to station troops in the various countries in the coalition.

Louis XIV and Stalin had similar theories concerning the balance of power; Louis XIV believed in Universal Monarchy and Stalin believed in totalitarianism. Totalitarianism and Universal Monarchy are similar; both deal with absolute control and no real parliament or cabinet. But the rulers differed in their tactics; Louis XIV tried to control territory while Stalin had a more oppressive rule. In the times of Louis XIV, it was common to marry for land, similar to a merger, and Louis XIV was no exception. In an effort to gain Spain and her colonies, Louis XIV married a sister of Charles II to assure himself a part in the will. Stalin was not focused so much on land expansion as he was on control within his country; he even tried to control the birth force. Alliances were also a factor in determining the degree of power, considering whether or not one's country was on the favored side. Both rulers saw alliances formed to stop their goals.

Louis XIV would have become a Universal Monarch had it not been for William III. Stalin could have also had absolute power over most of western Europe had the United States not stepped into the picture with the Truman Doctrine and NATO.

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