

Soviet-American Relations and the Struggle for Power in the Kremlin: The Case of June 1957

The Cold War between the Soviet Union and the United States was a period of heightened tension and rivalry that shaped global politics for decades. The summer of 1957 witnessed a particularly critical juncture in this conflict, as internal power struggles within the Kremlin intersected with the Cold War's escalating arms race and international crises.



The Berlin Crisis of 1961: Soviet-American Relations and the Struggle for Power in the Kremlin, June-

November, 1961 by Robert M. Slusser

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This article delves into the complex interplay between Soviet-American relations and the Kremlin's internal dynamics during June 1957, shedding light on the pivotal events, key players, and long-lasting consequences of this historical moment.

The Kremlin's Power Struggle

In the wake of Joseph Stalin's death in 1953, a power vacuum emerged within the Kremlin. A triumvirate consisting of Georgy Malenkov, Lavrentiy Beria, and Nikita Khrushchev initially emerged as the top contenders for power.

Malenkov, Stalin's designated successor, initially held the position of Chairman of the Council of Ministers. However, his efforts at de-Stalinization and his perceived weakness in foreign policy made him vulnerable to challenges.

Beria, the notorious head of the secret police, was known for his ruthlessness and ambition. He played a key role in purging Stalin's rivals and consolidating power within the security apparatus.

Khrushchev, on the other hand, was the First Secretary of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union. He gradually outmaneuvered his rivals by building alliances within the party and gaining support from the military.

The June 1957 Plenum

The struggle for power reached a boiling point in June 1957, when the Central Committee of the Communist Party convened a plenum meeting.

At this meeting, Khrushchev launched a scathing attack on Malenkov, accusing him of economic mismanagement and foreign policy blunders. Khrushchev also implicated Beria in a conspiracy to seize power.

Beria was arrested and executed shortly after the plenum, while Malenkov was forced to resign. Khrushchev emerged from the meeting as the

undisputed leader of the Soviet Union.

Impact on Soviet-American Relations

The power struggle within the Kremlin had a profound impact on Soviet-American relations.

Malenkov's downfall weakened the Soviet Union's position in the ongoing Berlin Crisis, which centered around the status of post-war Germany. Khrushchev's rise to power signaled a more assertive and aggressive Soviet foreign policy.

Furthermore, the power struggle coincided with the launch of Sputnik 1, the first artificial satellite, by the Soviet Union in October 1957. This event sparked the "Sputnik Crisis" in the United States, fueling fears of a Soviet technological advantage and leading to increased tensions.

The Nuclear Arms Race

The power struggle within the Kremlin also accelerated the nuclear arms race between the Soviet Union and the United States.

Khrushchev's ambition and his vocal threats against the West led to a significant buildup of nuclear weapons by both sides.

The Berlin Crisis and the Sputnik Crisis further escalated tensions, bringing the world to the brink of nuclear war.

The power struggle in the Kremlin in June 1957 was a defining moment in Soviet-American relations.

Khrushchev's emergence as leader signaled a shift in Soviet foreign policy, leading to increased tensions and the escalation of the nuclear arms race.

The events of June 1957 underscore the complex interplay between internal power dynamics and international politics, highlighting the profound impact that internal struggles can have on the global stage.

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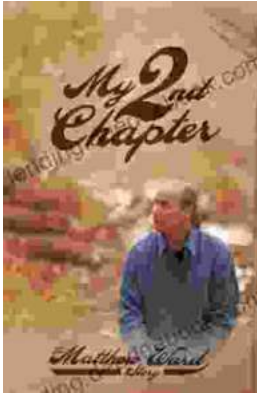
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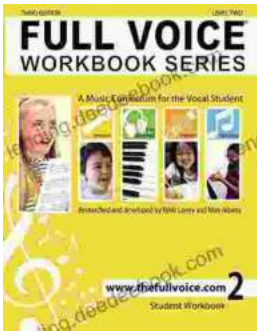
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