

The Cold War

8th grade Social Studies

Unit 6



Figure 1: _____

The Cold War

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Vocabulary

- Bolshevik: Russian revolutionaries that created the Soviet Union and believed in communism.
- Containment: U.S. policy to stop or contain the spread of Communism.
- Draft: In a military context, it is a compulsory means of recruiting.
- Ideological: Relating to a group or country's set of beliefs or ideas.
- Nazis: German political group that was in charge of Germany and other occupied countries during WWII.
- Partition: Division.
- Proliferation: Rapid increase in number.
- Proselytize: Convert or attempt to convert (someone) from one religion, belief, or opinion to another.
- Subversive: Someone working to overthrow the government.

VOCABULARY PRACTICE

Identify the part of speech of each of the above vocabulary terms and create your own original sentence for each.

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Causes of the Cold War



QUESTIONS

1. Compare and contrast the map above with the map of the various alliances in World War II that follows on the next page. How does it differ? How is it the same? (Be specific).

The Cold War is the name given to the relationship that developed primarily between the USA and the USSR after World War II. The Cold War dominated international affairs for decades, and included many major events and crises—the Cuban Missile Crisis, the Vietnam War, and the Berlin Wall to name a few. For many, the proliferation of nuclear weapons in each country was the most worrisome issue.

The rivalry between the United States and the Soviet Union for control over the postwar world emerged before World War II had even ended. U.S. presidents Franklin D. Roosevelt and Harry S. Truman and Soviet premier Joseph Stalin never really trusted one another, even while working together to defeat the Nazis. This mutual mistrust actually began as far back as 1917, when the United States refused to recognize the new Bolshevik government after the Russian Revolution.

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Stalin also resented the fact that the United States and Great Britain had not shared nuclear weapons research with the Soviet Union during the war and was unhappy with the countries' initial unwillingness to engage the Germans on a second front in order to take pressure off of the Soviets. Additionally, Stalin was irked by the fact that Truman had offered postwar relief loans to Great Britain but not to the USSR.

Important ideological differences separated the two countries as well, especially during the postwar years, when American foreign policy officials took it upon themselves to spread democracy across the globe. This goal conflicted drastically with the Russian

revolutionaries' original desire to overthrow capitalism. Having been

US	USSR
Free elections	No elections or rigged elections
Democratic	Autocratic / Dictatorship
Capitalist	Communist
Richest world power	Poor economic base
Personal freedom	All aspects of life and society controlled by the secret police
Freedom of the media	Total censorship

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invaded by Germany twice in the last fifty years, Soviet leaders also wanted to restructure Europe so that a buffer existed between the Germans and the Soviet border. Both the United States and the USSR believed that their respective survival was at stake, and each was therefore prepared to take any steps to win. As a result, both countries found themselves succumbing to the classic “prisoners’ dilemma”: working together would produce the best result, but with everything to lose, neither side could risk trusting the other.

QUESTIONS

2. What do you think is the origin of the term “Cold War”?
3. What are the causes of the Cold War between the U.S. and the Soviet Union? Cite specific evidence from the text above to support your claims.
4. Compare and contrast the causes of the Cold War with the cause of the “cold war” between the U.S. and the English after the Revolutionary War and before the War of 1812. You may need to refer to online resources to answer this question to the fullest.

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The Iron Curtain

The following is an excerpt of a speech given by British Prime Minister Churchill on March 5, 1946 at Westminster College in England.

A shadow has fallen upon the scenes so lately lighted by the Allied victory. Nobody knows what Soviet Russia and its Communist international organization intends to do in the immediate future, or what are the limits, if any, to their expansive and proselytizing tendencies. I have a strong admiration and regard for the valiant Russian people and for my wartime comrade, Marshal Stalin. There is deep sympathy and goodwill in Britain-and I doubt not here also-towards the peoples of all the Russias and a resolve to persevere through many differences and rebuffs in establishing lasting friendships. We understand the Russian need to be secure on her western frontiers by the removal of all possibility of German aggression. We welcome Russia to her rightful place among the leading nations of the world. We welcome her flag upon the seas. Above all, we welcome constant, frequent and growing contacts between the Russian people and our own people on both sides of the Atlantic. It is my duty however, for I am sure you would wish me to state the facts as I see them to you, to place before you certain facts about the present position in Europe.

From Stettin in the Baltic to Trieste in the Adriatic, an iron curtain has descended across the Continent. Behind that line lie all the capitals of the ancient states of Central and Eastern Europe. Warsaw, Berlin, Prague, Vienna, Budapest, Belgrade, Bucharest and Sofia, all these famous cities and the populations around them lie in what I must call the Soviet sphere, and all are subject in one form or another, not only to Soviet influence but to a very high and, in many cases, increasing measure of control from Moscow. Athens alone-

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Greece with its immortal glories-is free to decide its future at an election under British, American and French observation. The Russian-dominated Polish Government has been encouraged to make enormous and wrongful inroads upon Germany, and mass expulsions of millions of Germans on a scale grievous and undreamed-of are now taking place. The Communist parties, which were very small in all these Eastern States of Europe, have been raised to pre-eminence and power far beyond their numbers and are seeking everywhere to obtain totalitarian control. Police governments are prevailing in nearly every case, and so far, except in Czechoslovakia, there is no true democracy.

Turkey and Persia are both profoundly alarmed and disturbed at the claims which are being made upon them and at the pressure being exerted by the Moscow Government. An attempt is being made by the Russians in Berlin to build up a quasi-Communist party in their zone of Occupied Germany by showing special favours to groups of left-wing German leaders. At the end of the fighting last June, the American and British Armies withdrew westwards, in accordance with an earlier agreement, to a depth at some points of 150 miles upon a front of nearly four hundred miles, in order to allow our Russian allies to occupy this vast expanse of territory which the Western Democracies had conquered.

The safety of the world requires a new unity in Europe, from which no nation should be permanently outcast. It is from the quarrels of the strong parent races in Europe that the world wars we have witnessed, or which occurred in former times, have sprung. Twice in our own lifetime we have seen the United States, against their wishes and their traditions, against arguments, the force of which it is impossible not to comprehend, drawn by irresistible forces, into these wars in time to secure the victory of the good cause, but only after

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frightful slaughter and devastation had occurred. Twice the United States has had to send several millions of its young men across the Atlantic to find the war; but now war can find any nation, wherever it may dwell between dusk and dawn. Surely we should work with conscious purpose for a grand pacification of Europe, within the structure of the United Nations and in accordance with its Charter.

From what I have seen of our Russian friends and Allies during the war, I am convinced that there is nothing they admire so much as strength, and there is nothing for which they have less respect than for weakness, especially military weakness. For that reason the old doctrine of a balance of power is unsound.

Last time I saw it all coming and cried aloud to my own fellow-countrymen and to the world, but no one paid any attention. Up till the year 1933 or even 1935, Germany might have been saved from the awful fate which has overtaken her and we might all have been spared the miseries Hitler let loose upon mankind. There never was a war in all history easier to prevent by timely action than the one which has just desolated such great areas of the globe. It could have been prevented in my belief without the firing of a single shot, and Germany might be powerful, prosperous and honoured to-day; but no one would listen and one by one we were all sucked into the awful whirlpool. We surely must not let that happen again.

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QUESTIONS

5. What does Churchill mean by his use of the metaphor, the Iron Curtain?
6. What is the central idea of Churchill's speech? Cite at least three different pieces of evidence from the text to support Churchill's claim.
7. What tone does Churchill have in the beginning of his speech? Cite one piece of evidence to support your claim.
8. What tone does Churchill have at the end of his speech? Cite one piece of evidence to support your claim.

Containment

The Truman Doctrine and the Marshall Plan

The first step of the Containment policy was the Truman Doctrine of March 1947, which reflected the combativeness of President Harry Truman. Truman wanted to “scare the hell” out of Congress. Arguing that Greece and Turkey could fall victim to subversion without support from friendly nations, Truman asked Congress to authorize \$400-million in emergency assistance. To justify this course, he said: “I believe we must assist free peoples to work out their destinies in their own way.” The key to preventing the overthrow of free nations was to attack the conditions of “misery and want” that nurtured totalitarianism.

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President Harry S. Truman

In June 1947, Secretary of State George C. Marshall proposed the extension of massive economic assistance to the devastated nations of Europe, saying that the policy of the United States was not directed “against any country or doctrine but against hunger, poverty, desperation, and chaos. Its purpose should be the revival of a working economy in the world so as to permit the existence of political and social conditions in which free institutions can exist.”

What the Secretary of State left unsaid was that while the U.S. plan would be open to the Soviet Union and its satellites in Eastern Europe, it emphasized the free market economy as the best path to economic reconstruction—and the best defense against communism in Western Europe. Congress responded to Marshall’s proposal by authorizing the European Recovery Program, better known as the Marshall Plan. An investment of about \$13 billion in Europe during the next few years resulted in the extraordinarily rapid and durable reconstruction of a democratic Western Europe.

Containment and Collective Defense

Collective security was the reason behind the creation of the North Atlantic Treaty. Signed in Washington in April 1949, it created the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO). Economic assistance and collective defense agreements became the bulwark of Western containment policy.

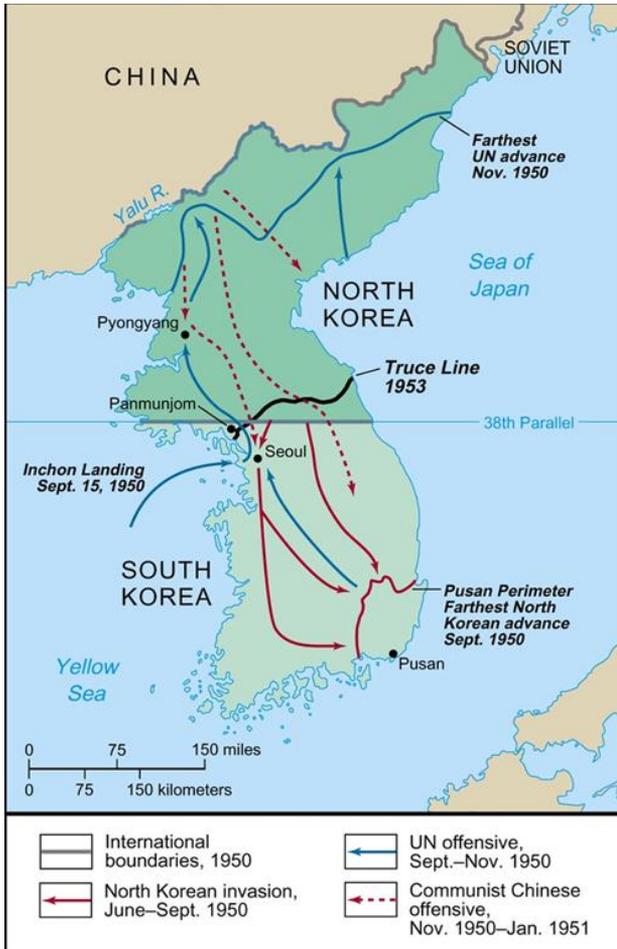
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QUESTIONS

9. What is Containment?
10. Why did Truman want to “scare the hell” out of Congress?
11. What did Secretary of State George C. Marshall leave unsaid? Why was it unsaid? Cite evidence from the text to support your answer.
12. What is NATO and why was it created? What other multinational organization or alliance is NATO similar to?

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NSC-68 & the Korean War



The events of 1949 made foreign policy the nation's top priority. NATO became a working alliance, the United States provided military assistance to Europe, the Soviet Union detonated an atomic bomb, and Mao Zedong's communist party took control of mainland China. The Department of

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State ordered a complete review of American strategic and military policy, and, in April 1950, the Department sent a paper calling for a broad-based and reinvigorated containment policy toward the Soviet Union, directly to the President. The paper later became known as NSC-68. After the outbreak of fighting on the Korean peninsula, NSC-68 was accepted throughout the government as the foundation of American foreign policy.



U.S. Soldiers during the Korean War

When North Korea invaded South Korea in June 1950, the United States sponsored a "police action"—a war in all but name—under the auspices of the United Nations. The Department of State coordinated U.S. strategic decisions with the other 16 countries

contributing troops to the fighting. In addition, the Department worked closely with the government of Syngman Rhee, encouraging him to implement reform so that the UN claim of defending democracy in Korea would be accurate.

The Korean War was difficult to fight and unpopular domestically. In late 1951, the two sides bogged down on the 38th parallel, and the conflict seemed reminiscent¹ of trench warfare in World War I. The American public tired of a war without victory, especially when negotiation stalled as well. The stalemate eroded Truman's public support and helped to elect the Republican presidential candidate, popular military hero General Dwight D. Eisenhower, as the next President.

¹ Tending to remind one of something.

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QUESTIONS

13. Create a timeline of the major events of the Korean War.
14. What was the role of the United States in the Korean War?

McCarthyism

The Cold War years were troubling ones for the Foreign Service, after it became the prime target of Senator Joseph McCarthy's search for pro-Communist subversives in the U.S. Government.



Senator Joseph McCarthy

In February 1950, shortly after the Soviet Union developed its own nuclear weapons and Mao Zedong's communist forces seized power in China, the Wisconsin Senator launched his anti-communist crusade with a speech in Wheeling,

West Virginia. Describing the international position of the United States in the most dire terms, he insisted: "How can we account for our present situation unless we believe that men high in the government are concerting to deliver us to disaster? This must be the product of a great conspiracy on a scale so immense as to dwarf any previous venture in the history of man."

He announced that he had a list of 205 subversives—"a list of names that were made known to the Secretary of State as being members of the Communist Party and who nevertheless are still working and shaping policy in the State Department." Senator McCarthy never made that list public or proved any of

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his allegations. A number of the most experienced Foreign Service officers—notably the Department’s corps of Far Eastern experts, the so-called “China hands,” including Oliver Edmund Clubb, John Patton Davies, John Stewart Service, and John Carter Vincent—were forced out of the Department or suffered serious damage to their reputations.

McCarthy’s allegations² had a lasting effect on those who remained in the Department. John W. Ford, a security officer at the time, has since noted,

“[F]ew people who lived through the McCarthy era in the Department of State can ever forget the fear, intimidation, and sense of outrage which permeated [the government].”

In 1978, the Under Secretary of State for Political Affairs, David D. Newsom, said:

“I can recall the shock of the taunts and suspicions leveled at the State Department and those who served in it. It must be satisfying, but not full recompense, for those who suffered in that period to have our nation now realize that they were substantially right.”

The mistaken notion that the Department of State somehow served the nation’s enemies lingered on for some years. One former Department of State employee, Epers, was found guilty of passing secrets to the Soviets in the late 1930s, but this exception did not detract from the fact that the criticism by McCarthy and others of like mind was unjustified.

² Accusations.

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QUESTIONS

15. How would you characterize Senator McCarthy's beliefs about communists hiding in America's own government?
16. Why were the two quotes included above? What was their purpose in this reading?

The Vietnam War

The Second Indochina War, 1954-1975, grew out of the long conflict between France and Vietnam. In July 1954, after one hundred years of colonial rule, a defeated France was forced to leave Vietnam. Nationalist forces under the direction of General Vo Nguyen Giap trounced the allied French troops at the remote mountain outpost of Dien Bien Phu in the northwest corner of Vietnam. This decisive battle convinced the French that they could no longer maintain their Indochinese colonies and Paris quickly sued for peace. As the two sides came together in Geneva, Switzerland, international events were already shaping the future of Vietnam's modern revolution.

The Geneva Peace Accords

The Geneva Peace Accords, signed by France and Vietnam in the summer of 1954, represented the worst of all possible futures for war-torn Vietnam. Because of outside pressures brought to bear by the Soviet Union and the People's Republic of China, Vietnam's delegates to the Geneva Conference agreed to the temporary partition of their nation at the seventeenth parallel to allow France a face-saving defeat.

According to the terms of the Geneva Accords, Vietnam would hold national elections in 1956 to reunify the country. The division at the seventeenth parallel, a temporary separation without cultural precedent, would vanish with the

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elections. The United States, however, had other ideas. Secretary of State John Foster Dulles did not support the Geneva Accords because he thought they granted too much power to the Communist Party of Vietnam.

Instead, Dulles and President Dwight D. Eisenhower supported the creation of a counter-revolutionary alternative south of the seventeenth parallel. The United States supported this effort at nation-building through a series of multilateral agreements that created the Southeast Asia Treaty Organization (SEATO).

South Vietnam Under Ngo Dinh Diem

Using SEATO for political cover, the Eisenhower administration helped create a new nation from dust in southern Vietnam. In 1955, with the help of massive amounts of American military, political, and economic aid, the Government of the Republic of Vietnam (**GVN or South Vietnam**) was born. The following year, Ngo Dinh Diem, a staunchly anti-Communist figure from the South, won a dubious election that made him president of the GVN. Almost immediately, Diem claimed that his newly created government was under attack from Communists in the north. Diem argued that the Democratic Republic of Vietnam (**DRV or North Vietnam**) wanted to take South Vietnam by force. In late 1957, with American military aid, Diem began to counterattack. He used the help of the American Central Intelligence Agency to identify those who sought to bring his government down and arrested thousands. Diem passed a repressive series of acts known as Law 10/59 that made it legal to hold someone in jail if s/he was a suspected Communist without bringing formal charges.

The outcry against Diem's harsh and oppressive actions was immediate. Buddhist monks and nuns were joined by students, business people, intellectuals, and peasants in opposition to

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the corrupt rule of Ngo Dinh Diem. The more these forces attacked Diem's troops and secret police, the more Diem complained that the Communists were trying to take South Vietnam by force. This was, in Diem's words, "a hostile act of aggression by North Vietnam against peace-loving and democratic South Vietnam."

From 1956-1960, the Communist Party of Vietnam tried unsuccessfully to cause Diem's collapse by exerting tremendous internal political pressure. After Diem's attacks on suspected Communists in the South, however, southern Communists convinced the Party to adopt more violent tactics to guarantee Diem's downfall.

The National Liberation Front

On December 20, 1960, the Party's new united front, the National Liberation Front (NLF), was born. Anyone could join this front as long as they opposed Ngo Dinh Diem and wanted to unify Vietnam.

From the birth of the NLF, government officials in Washington claimed that Hanoi directed the NLF's violent attacks against the Saigon regime. In a series of government "White Papers," Washington insiders denounced the NLF, claiming that it was merely a puppet of Hanoi and that its non-Communist elements were Communist dupes. The NLF, on the other hand, argued that it was autonomous and independent of the Communists in Hanoi and that it was made up mostly of non-Communists. Many anti-war activists supported the NLF's claims. Washington continued to discredit the NLF, however, calling it the "**Viet Cong**," a derogatory and slang term meaning Vietnamese Communist.

December 1961 White Paper

In 1961, President Kennedy sent a team to Vietnam to report on conditions in the South and to assess future American aid

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requirements. The report, now known as the "December 1961 White Paper," argued for an increase in military, technical, and economic aid, and the introduction of large-scale American "advisers" to help stabilize the Diem regime and crush the NLF. As Kennedy weighed the merits of these recommendations, some of his other advisers urged the president to withdraw from Vietnam altogether, claiming that it was a "dead-end alley."

To counteract the NLF's success in the countryside, Washington and Saigon launched an ambitious and deadly military effort in the rural areas. Called the **Strategic Hamlet Program**, the new counterinsurgency plan rounded up villagers and placed them in "safe hamlets" constructed by the GVN. The idea was to isolate the NLF from villagers, its base of support. This culturally-insensitive plan produced limited results and further alienated the peasants from the Saigon regime. The Saigon regime's reactive policies ironically produced more supporters for the NLF.

Military Coup



Figure 2: Self-immolating monk

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Figure 3: Kennedy Assassinated

Buddhist monks to self-immolation. The pictures of the monks engulfed in flames made world headlines and caused considerable consternation in Washington. By late September, the Buddhist protest had created such dislocation in the south that the Kennedy administration supported a coup. In 1963, some of Diem's own generals in the Army of the Republic of Vietnam (ARVN) approached the American Embassy in Saigon with plans to overthrow Diem. With Washington's tacit approval, on November 1, 1963, Diem and his brother were captured and later killed.

Three weeks later, President Kennedy was assassinated on the streets of Dallas.

By the summer of 1963, because of NLF successes and its own failures, it was clear that the GVN was on the verge of political collapse. Diem's brother, Ngo Dinh Nhu, had raided the Buddhist pagodas of South Vietnam, claiming that they had harbored the Communists that were creating the political instability. The result was massive protests on the streets of Saigon that led

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At the time of the Kennedy and Diem assassinations, there were 16,000 military advisers in Vietnam. The Kennedy administration had managed to run the war from Washington without the large-scale introduction of American combat troops. The continuing political problems in Saigon, however, convinced the new president, Lyndon Baines Johnson, that more aggressive action was needed.

Gulf of Tonkin Resolution

The Gulf of Tonkin Resolution, passed both the House and Senate with only two dissenting votes (Senators Morse of Oregon and Gruening of Alaska). The Resolution was followed by limited reprisal air attacks against the DRV.

The bombing missions, known as **OPERATION ROLLING THUNDER**, caused the Communist Party to reassess its own war strategy. From 1960 through late 1964, the Party believed it could win a military victory in the south "in a relatively short period of time." With the new American military commitment, confirmed in March 1965 when Johnson sent the first combat troops to Vietnam, the Party moved to a protracted war strategy. The idea was to get the United States bogged down in a war that it could not win militarily and create unfavorable conditions for political victory.

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The War in America



One of the greatest ironies in a war rich in ironies was that Washington had also moved toward a limited war in Vietnam. The Johnson administration wanted to fight this war in "cold blood." This meant that America would go to war in Vietnam with the precision of a surgeon

with little noticeable impact on domestic culture. A limited war called for limited mobilization of resources, material and human, and caused little disruption in everyday life in America.

Of course, these goals were never met. The Vietnam War did have a major impact on everyday life in America, and the Johnson administration was forced to consider domestic consequences of its decisions every day. Eventually, there simply were not enough volunteers to continue to fight a protracted war and the government instituted a **draft**. As the deaths mounted and Americans continued to leave for Southeast Asia, the Johnson administration was met with the full weight of American anti-war sentiments. Protests erupted on college campuses and in major cities at first, but by 1968 every corner of the country seemed to have felt the war's impact. Perhaps one of the most famous incidents in the anti-war movement was the police riot in Chicago during the 1968 Democratic National Convention. Hundreds of thousands of people came to Chicago in August 1968 to protest American

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intervention in Vietnam and the leaders of the Democratic Party who continued to prosecute the war.

The Tet Offensive

By 1968, things had gone from bad to worse for the Johnson administration. In late January, the DRV and the NLF launched coordinated attacks against the major southern cities. These attacks, known in the West as the Tet Offensive, were designed to force the Johnson administration to the bargaining table. The Communist Party correctly believed that the American people were growing war-weary and that its continued successes in the countryside had tipped the balance of forces in its favor. Although many historians have since claimed that the Tet Offensive was a military defeat, but a psychological victory for the Communists, it had produced the desired results. In late March 1968, a disgraced Lyndon Johnson announced that he would not seek the Democratic Party's re-nomination for president and hinted that he would go to the bargaining table with the Communists to end the war.

The Nixon Years

The secret negotiations began in the spring of 1968 in Paris and soon it was made public that Americans and Vietnamese were meeting to discuss an end to the long and costly war. Despite the progress in Paris, the Democratic Party could not rescue the presidency from Republican challenger Richard Nixon who claimed he had a secret plan to end the war.

Nixon's secret plan, it turned out, was borrowing from a strategic move from Lyndon Johnson's last year in office. The new president continued a process called "Vietnamization", an awful term that implied that Vietnamese were not fighting and dying in the jungles of Southeast Asia. This strategy brought American troops home while increasing the air war over the

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DRV and relying more on the South Vietnamese Army for ground attacks. The Nixon years also saw the expansion of the war into neighboring Laos and Cambodia, violating the international rights of these countries in secret campaigns, as the White House tried desperately to rout out Communist sanctuaries and supply routes. The intense bombing campaigns and intervention in Cambodia in late April 1970 sparked intense campus protests all across America. At Kent State in Ohio, four students were killed by National Guardsmen who were called out to preserve order on campus after days of anti-Nixon protest. Shock waves crossed the nation as students at Jackson State in Mississippi were also shot and killed for political reasons, prompting one mother to cry, "**They are killing our babies in Vietnam and in our own backyard.**"

The expanded air war did not deter the Communist Party, however, and it continued to make hard demands in Paris. Nixon's Vietnamization plan temporarily quieted domestic critics, but his continued reliance on an expanded air war to provide cover for an American retreat angered U.S. citizens. The conflict intensified in December 1972, when the Nixon administration unleashed a series of deadly bombing raids against targets in the DRV's largest cities, Hanoi and Haiphong. These attacks, now known as **the Christmas bombings**, brought immediate condemnation from the international community and forced the Nixon administration to reconsider its tactics and negotiation strategy.

The Paris Peace Agreement

In early January 1973, the Nixon White House convinced the Democratic regime in Saigon that they would not abandon the GVN if they signed onto the peace accord. On January 23, therefore, the final draft was initialed, ending open hostilities between the United States and the DRV. The Paris Peace

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Agreement did not end the conflict in Vietnam, however, as the Democratic regime continued to battle Communist forces. From March 1973 until the fall of Saigon on April 30, 1975, South Vietnamese Army forces tried desperately to save the South from political and military collapse. The end finally came, however, as North Vietnamese tanks rolled south along National Highway One. On the morning of April 30, Communist forces captured the presidential palace in Saigon, ending the Second Indochina War.

QUESTIONS

17. Why were the Geneva Peace Accords the worst of all possible futures for Vietnam?
18. What group or organization that we have previously studied, can the NLF be compared to?
19. What questionably moral acts did the United States engage in during the Vietnam War?
20. What was the role of the United States in the Vietnam War? (be as specific and detailed as possible, citing evidence from the text to support your answer).

The Space Race

SPUTNIK IN CONTEXT

By the mid-1950s, the U.S.-Soviet Cold War had worked its way into the fabric of everyday life in both countries, fueled by the arms race and the growing threat of nuclear weapons,

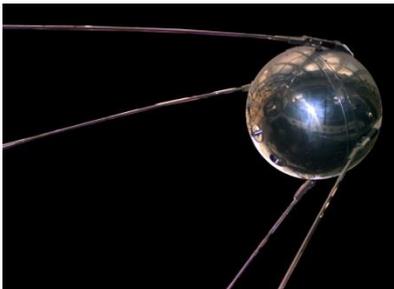


Figure 4: Sputnik

wide-ranging espionage and counter-espionage between the two countries, war in Korea and a clash of words and ideas carried out in the media. These tensions would continue throughout the space

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race, exacerbated by such events as the construction of the Berlin Wall in 1961, the Cuban missile crisis of 1962 and the outbreak of the Vietnam war in Southeast Asia.

Space exploration served as another dramatic arena for Cold War competition. On October 4, 1957, a Soviet R-7 intercontinental ballistic missile launched Sputnik (Russian for “traveler”), the world’s first artificial satellite and the first man-made object to be placed into the Earth’s orbit. Sputnik’s launch came as a surprise, and not a pleasant one, to most Americans. In the United States, space was seen as the next frontier, a logical extension of the grand American tradition of exploration, and it was crucial not to lose too much ground to the Soviets. In addition, this demonstration of the overwhelming power of the R-7 missile—seemingly capable of delivering a nuclear warhead into U.S. air space—made gathering intelligence about Soviet military activities particularly urgent.

A NEW URGENCY

In 1958, the U.S. launched its own satellite, Explorer I, designed by the U.S. Army under the direction of rocket scientist Wernher von Braun. That same year, President Dwight Eisenhower signed a public order creating the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA), a federal agency dedicated to space exploration.

Eisenhower also created two national security-oriented space programs that would operate simultaneously with NASA’s program. The first, spearheaded by the U.S. Air Force, dedicated itself to exploiting the military potential of space. The second, led by the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA), the Air Force and a new organization called the National Reconnaissance Office (the existence of which was kept

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classified until the early 1990s) was code-named Corona; it would use orbiting satellites to gather intelligence on the Soviet Union and its allies.

SPACE RACE HEATS UP

In 1959, the Soviet space program took another step forward with the launch of Luna 2, the first space probe to hit the moon. In April 1961, the Soviet cosmonaut Yuri Gagarin became the first person to orbit Earth, traveling in the capsule-like spacecraft Vostok 1. For the U.S. effort to send a man into space, dubbed Project Mercury, NASA engineers designed a smaller, cone-shaped capsule far lighter than Vostok; they tested the craft with chimpanzees, and held a final test flight in March 1961 before the Soviets were able to pull ahead with Gagarin's launch. On May 5, astronaut Alan Shepard became the first American in space (though not in orbit).

Later that May, President John F. Kennedy made the bold, public claim that the U.S. would land a man on the moon before the end of the decade. In February 1962, John Glenn became the first American to orbit Earth, and by the end of that year, the foundations of NASA's lunar landing program—dubbed Project Apollo—were in place.

ACHIEVEMENTS OF APOLLO

From 1961 to 1964, NASA's budget was increased almost 500 percent, and the lunar landing program eventually involved some 34,000 NASA employees and 375,000 employees of industrial and university contractors. Apollo suffered a setback in January 1967, when three astronauts were killed after their spacecraft caught fire during a launch simulation. Meanwhile, the Soviet Union's lunar landing program proceeded tentatively, partly due to internal debate over its necessity and

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to the untimely death (in January 1966) of Sergey Korolyov, chief engineer of the Soviet space program.

December 1968 saw the launch of Apollo 8, the first manned space mission to orbit the moon, from NASA's massive launch facility on Merritt Island, near Cape Canaveral, Florida. On July 16, 1969, U.S. astronauts Neil Armstrong, Edwin "Buzz" Aldrin and Michael Collins set off on the Apollo 11 space mission, the first lunar landing attempt. After landing successfully on July 20, Armstrong became the first man to walk on the moon's surface; he famously called the moment "one small step for man, one giant leap for mankind."

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CONCLUSION OF THE SPACE RACE

By landing on the moon, the United States effectively “won” the space race that had begun with Sputnik’s launch in 1957. For their part, the Soviets made four failed attempts to launch a lunar landing craft between 1969 and 1972, including a spectacular launch-pad explosion in July 1969. From beginning to end, the American public’s attention was captivated by the space race, and the various developments by the Soviet and U.S. space programs were heavily covered in the national media. This frenzy of interest was further encouraged by the new medium of television. Astronauts came to be seen as the ultimate American heroes, and earth-bound men and women seemed to enjoy living vicariously through them. Soviets, in turn, were pictured as the ultimate villains, with their massive, relentless efforts to surpass America and prove the power of the communist system.

With the conclusion of the space race, U.S. government interest in lunar missions waned after the early 1970s. In 1975, the joint Apollo-Soyuz mission sent three U.S. astronauts into space aboard an Apollo spacecraft that docked in orbit with a Soviet-made Soyuz vehicle. When the commanders of the two crafts officially greeted each other, their “handshake in space” served to symbolize the gradual improvement of U.S.-Soviet relations in the late Cold War-era.

QUESTIONS

21. Why was the launch of Sputnik viewed as such a threat by the United States?
22. How did the U.S. respond to the Soviet space threat?
23. How did the Space Race “heat up?”
24. What defining event effectively concluded the Space Race?
25. What effect did the Space Race have on the United States?

The Cold War

Nuclear War: The Cuban Missile Crisis



During the Cuban Missile Crisis, leaders of the U.S. and the Soviet Union engaged in a tense, 13-day political and military standoff in October 1962 over the installation of nuclear-armed Soviet missiles on Cuba, just 90 miles from U.S. shores. In a TV address on October 22, 1962, President John Kennedy (1917-63) notified Americans about the presence of the missiles, explained his decision to enact a naval blockade around Cuba and made it clear the U.S. was prepared to use military force if necessary to neutralize this perceived threat to national security. Following this news, many people feared the world was on the brink of nuclear war. However, disaster was

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avoided when the U.S. agreed to Soviet leader Nikita Khrushchev's (1894-1971) offer to remove the Cuban missiles in exchange for the U.S. promising not to invade Cuba. Kennedy also secretly agreed to remove U.S. missiles from Turkey.

DISCOVERING THE MISSILES

After seizing power in the Caribbean island nation of Cuba in 1959, leftist revolutionary leader Fidel Castro (1926-) aligned himself with the Soviet Union. Under Castro, Cuba grew dependent on the Soviets for military and economic aid. During this time, the U.S. and the Soviets (and their respective allies) were engaged in the Cold War (1945-91), an ongoing series of largely political and economic clashes.

RANDOM FACT

The actor Kevin Costner (1955-) starred in a movie about the Cuban Missile Crisis titled "Thirteen Days." Released in 2000, the movie's tagline was "You'll never believe how close we came."

The two superpowers plunged into one of their biggest Cold War confrontations after the pilot of an American U-2 spy plane making a high-altitude pass over Cuba on October 14, 1962, photographed a Soviet SS-4 medium-range ballistic missile being assembled for installation.

President Kennedy was briefed about the situation on October 16, and he immediately called together a group of advisors and officials known as the executive committee, or ExCom. For nearly the next two weeks, the president and his team wrestled with a diplomatic crisis of epic proportions, as did their counterparts in the Soviet Union.

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A NEW THREAT TO THE U.S.

For the American officials, the urgency of the situation stemmed from the fact that the nuclear-armed Cuban missiles were being installed so close to the U.S. mainland—just 90 miles south of Florida. From that launch point, they were capable of quickly reaching targets in the eastern U.S. If allowed to become operational, the missiles would fundamentally alter the complexion of the nuclear rivalry between the U.S. and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR), which up to that point had been dominated by the Americans.

Soviet leader Nikita Khrushchev had gambled on sending the missiles to Cuba with the specific goal of increasing his nation's nuclear strike capability. The Soviets had long felt uneasy about the number of nuclear weapons that were targeted at them from sites in Western Europe and Turkey, and they saw the deployment of missiles in Cuba as a way to level the playing field. Another key factor in the Soviet missile scheme was the hostile relationship between the U.S. and Cuba. The Kennedy administration had already launched one attack on the island—the failed Bay of Pigs invasion in 1961—and Castro and Khrushchev saw the missiles as a means of deterring further U.S. aggression.

WEIGHING THE OPTIONS

From the outset of the crisis, Kennedy and ExCom determined that the presence of Soviet missiles in Cuba was unacceptable. The challenge facing them was to orchestrate their removal without initiating a wider conflict—and possibly a nuclear war. In deliberations that stretched on for nearly a week, they came up with a variety of options, including a bombing attack on the missile sites and a full-scale invasion of Cuba. But Kennedy ultimately decided on a more measured approach. First, he would employ the U.S. Navy to establish a blockade, or quarantine, of the island to prevent the Soviets from delivering

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additional missiles and military equipment. Second, he would deliver an ultimatum that the existing missiles be removed.

In a television broadcast on October 22, 1962, the president notified Americans about the presence of the missiles, explained his decision to enact the blockade and made it clear that the U.S. was prepared to use military force if necessary to neutralize this perceived threat to national security. Following this public declaration, people around the globe nervously waited for the Soviet response. Some Americans, fearing their country was on the brink of nuclear war, hoarded food and gas.

SHOWDOWN AT SEA

A crucial moment in the unfolding crisis arrived on October 24, when Soviet ships bound for Cuba neared the line of U.S. vessels enforcing the blockade. An attempt by the Soviets to breach the blockade would likely have sparked a military confrontation that could have quickly escalated to a nuclear exchange. But the Soviet ships stopped short of the blockade.

Although the events at sea offered a positive sign that war could be averted, they did nothing to address the problem of the missiles already in Cuba. The tense standoff between the superpowers continued through the week, and on October 27, an American reconnaissance plane was shot down over Cuba, and a U.S. invasion force was readied in Florida. (The 35-year-old pilot of the downed plane, Major Rudolf Anderson, is considered the sole U.S. combat casualty of the Cuban missile crisis.) “I thought it was the last Saturday I would ever see,” recalled U.S. Secretary of Defense Robert McNamara (1916-2009), as quoted by Martin Walker in “The Cold War.” A similar sense of doom was felt by other key players on both sides.

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A DEAL ENDS THE STANDOFF

Despite the enormous tension, Soviet and American leaders found a way out of the impasse. During the crisis, the Americans and Soviets had exchanged letters and other communications, and on October 26, Khrushchev sent a message to Kennedy in which he offered to remove the Cuban missiles in exchange for a promise by U.S. leaders not to invade Cuba. The following day, the Soviet leader sent a letter proposing that the USSR would dismantle its missiles in Cuba if the Americans removed their missile installations in Turkey.

Officially, the Kennedy administration decided to accept the terms of the first message and ignore the second Khrushchev letter entirely. Privately, however, American officials also agreed to withdraw their nation's missiles from Turkey. U.S. Attorney General Robert Kennedy (1925-68) personally delivered the message to the Soviet ambassador in Washington, and on October 28, the crisis drew to a close.

Both the Americans and Soviets were sobered by the Cuban Missile Crisis. The following year, a direct "hot line" communication link was installed between Washington and Moscow to help defuse similar situations, and the superpowers signed two treaties related to nuclear weapons. The Cold War was far from over, though. In fact, another legacy of the crisis was that it convinced the Soviets to increase their investment in an arsenal of intercontinental ballistic missiles capable of reaching the U.S. from Soviet territory.

QUESTIONS

26. Create a timeline of the major events of the Cuban Missile Crisis.
27. Using the reading above as your source, in your role as president of the U.S., prepare a brief letter to read to the American people explaining what decision you will make regarding the Cuban Missile Crisis.