

Setting the Stage for the Cold War and Decolonization

We would consider it our moral duty to lend all support to the ending of colonialism and imperialism so that people everywhere are free to mould their own destiny.

—Lal Bahadur Shastri, Indian independence movement leader in the 1920s

Essential Question: What was the historical context for the Cold War after World War II?

After the global conflict of World War II, the largely unfulfilled hopes for greater colonial self-government after World War I were revived. Shastri's anti-imperialist sentiments helped explain how global affairs changed after the war ended in 1945. Colonies' desire for independence became intertwined with a global ideological conflict between capitalist countries (led by the United States) and communist countries (led by the Soviet Union).

Bringing the War to an End

During World War II, the leaders of Great Britain, the United States, and the Soviet Union, known as the **Big Three**, held several meetings to plan for the post-war world. Three of these were particularly important.

The Tehran Conference During the **Tehran Conference** in Iran in November 1943, the Allies agreed that the Soviet Union would focus on freeing Eastern Europe, while Britain and the United States would concentrate on Western Europe. In addition, Britain and the United States agreed to a Soviet demand to shift some Polish territory to the Soviet Union, which would be offset by Poland gaining territory elsewhere, mostly from Germany.

The Yalta Conference By February 1945, the Allies knew that Germany was near defeat, but they disagreed about what should happen after Germany's surrender. At the **Yalta Conference**, at a resort on the Black Sea, the leaders focused on plans for reconstructing Eastern Europe and for defeating Japan.

- Franklin Roosevelt wanted free, democratic elections in Eastern Europe. He also wanted the Soviets to join the war against Japan.



- Stalin demanded influence over Eastern Europe. Fearful that another Napoleon or Hitler would invade Russia from the West, he wanted Eastern Europe as a buffer zone. In return for Soviet help against Japan, he wanted control of islands claimed by Japan, ports ruled by China, and part ownership of a Manchurian railroad.

Roosevelt thought that after years of overseas war, the American public was unlikely to support a war against the Soviets over the fate of democracy in Eastern Europe. The conference ended with a Soviet pledge to fight Japan, but the Soviets offered only vague assurances on free elections in Eastern Europe.

The Potsdam Conference The final meeting among leaders of the Big Three, the **Potsdam Conference**, began in July 1945 in Germany. **Harry Truman**, who had become president after Roosevelt died on April 12, represented the United States. Churchill started the conference but lost his position as prime minister in mid-July and was replaced by Clement Atlee.

Truman insisted on free elections in Eastern Europe. However, by then Soviet troops had occupied the region. Stalin refused Truman's demand. With the backing of Soviet power, communists eventually gained control of East Germany, Poland, Czechoslovakia, Hungary, Bulgaria, and Romania.

By 1945, the United States and the Soviet Union lacked trust in one another and had begun the aggressive rhetoric that would become standard for four decades following World War II. Potsdam and the earlier conferences failed to settle important issues between the world's major powers. As a result, the stage was set for a cold war between countries still devastated by a hot war.

Shifting Balance of Power

When the war ended in 1945, parts of Europe and Asia had been devastated. The war resulted in 40 million to 60 million deaths. It destroyed factories, roads, bridges, and other structures needed for industrial production. It forced millions of people to move. Many were fleeing communism or searching for safety and opportunity.

Massive Destruction in Europe Wartime losses were not evenly distributed throughout Europe. In general, East and Central Europe suffered greater losses than did Western Europe. Worst hit were the Soviet Union, Poland, and Germany. Each lost between 10 and 20 percent of its population.

Countries such as Great Britain and France, despite their losses, maintained strong traditions of democracy and the rule of law. They still had strong educational systems, including outstanding universities. They remained home to large, innovative corporations. These advantages provided the foundation for Western Europe to become a global leader after the war. However, because of the massive physical destruction and population loss in victorious and defeated nations, Europe became less influential and powerful in the rest of the world, while the United States and the Soviet Union became more powerful. (Connect: Write a paragraph comparing the destruction caused by World War I and World War II. See Topic 7.8.)

The U.S.-Soviet Rivalry In 1945, then, the United States was poised to become the most powerful country in the world. Of all the major countries involved in the war, the United States suffered the least. Heavy fighting occurred on U.S. soil, in the Philippines, but the U.S. mainland was untouched by attacks. Its industrial base and infrastructure not only remained intact but also grew stronger through government-funded military contracts. Further, the loss of life in the United States was far lower than in Europe. The relative prosperity of the United States allowed it to provide financial aid to European countries after the war. This aid program, called the Marshall Plan, is described in Topic 8.2.

The United States also had developed atomic weapons and used them during the war, making the country even more formidable. The Soviets successfully tested an atomic bomb of their own in 1949. By the end of the 1940s, only the Soviet Union could challenge the United States in military might and political influence.

Advances During the War Military research at universities and in private companies, often funded by government, resulted in tremendous technological developments during World War II. Among the items that were developed for, improved, or used more widely by the military were air pressure systems for airplane cabins, refrigeration for food, stronger plywood for construction, and a variety of plastics for many uses. One of the most important advances was the spread of the use of penicillin, which saved the lives of thousands of wounded soldiers. Each of these advances would be adapted for civilian use, thereby improving the lives of millions of people.

The Start of the Cold War

The U.S.-Soviet tensions evident at Tehran, Yalta, and Potsdam made conflict likely. However, the high costs of the war meant that neither superpower wanted a full-scale war with the other. Rather, they settled into a **cold war**, a conflict does not involve direct military confrontation between two or more rival states. The Cold War between the superpowers played out in propaganda campaigns, secret operations, and an arms race.

The deadliest results of the Cold War occurred outside the lands of the two superpowers. The U.S.-Soviet rivalry led both countries to arm opposing sides in conflicts around the world, thereby transforming small civil wars and regional conflicts into much larger events. This increased the death tolls and level of destruction in these wars.

In the early 1950s, the United States and Soviet Union each developed a **hydrogen bomb** that was much more powerful than the atomic bombs dropped on Japan at the end of World War II. The arms race fostered close ties between the military and the industries that developed weapons. Before he left office in 1961, President **Dwight Eisenhower** expressed his concerns about the U.S.-Soviet competition for supremacy in nuclear armaments. He warned against allowing the **military-industrial complex**, the informal alliance between the



government and the large defense contractors, to gain too much power. In later decades, citizens in many countries expressed similar worries. They began to protest the stockpiling of nuclear weapons.

Breakdown of Empires

After World War II, efforts resumed to undermine colonialism. The start of World War I had marked the high point of colonial empires. The British, the French, and other Europeans had colonized almost all of Africa, India, and Southeast Asia, and they dominated China. Empires based in Austria, Turkey, and Russia were multiethnic states, but each was dominated by one group, leaving others feeling discriminated against. After World War I, the demand for **self-determination**, the idea that each country should choose its own form of government and leaders, was spreading. The Austro-Hungary Empire and the Ottoman Empire crumbled, restructured into multiple new countries. However, in China, India, and throughout Africa, Europeans generally maintained their power, even expanding it over territories that had been part of the Ottoman Empire.

During World War II, the leading colonial powers focused on stopping Hitler. As a result, the anti-colonial movements probably grew stronger, but actual independence made little progress. However, after World War II, the foundation was set for the dismantling of colonial empires:

- In the colonized world, movements for self-determination grew. Often, they included both advocates of greater self-rule and proponents of full independence.
- World War II had so weakened Great Britain, France, and the other colonial powers that they had fewer resources to resist independence.
- The Cold War between the United States and the Soviet Union gave anti-colonial activists two superpowers to recruit as supporters.

The successful efforts of people to undermine colonial empires are described in Topics 8.5 and 8.6.

| KEY TERMS BY THEME | | |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <p>GOVERNMENT: Europe Big Three Tehran Conference Yalta Conference Potsdam Conference</p> | <p>GOVERNMENT: United States Harry Truman Cold War Dwight Eisenhower</p> <p>SOCIETY: Anti-Colonial Movements self-determination</p> | <p>TECHNOLOGY: Armaments hydrogen bomb military-industrial complex</p> |

The Cold War

Let us not be deceived—we are today in the midst of a cold war.

—Bernard Baruch, banker and presidential advisor, 1947

Essential Question: What were the causes and effects of the ideological struggle of the Cold War?

After World War II, the democratic United States and the authoritarian Soviet Union emerged as the strongest countries in the world. Both countries had expanded their territorial control and influence after the war. After the Potsdam Conference in Germany in 1945, Truman and Stalin soon recognized their rivalry for dominance over Europe and Asia. The ideological conflict noted by Baruch, the power struggle between capitalism (led by the United States) and communism (led by the Soviet Union), was the central global conflict over the next 40 years.

Cooperation Despite Conflict: The United Nations

Despite ideological differences, the Allies shared a commitment to building a new organization to promote peace and prosperity to replace the League of Nations. The League had failed for two significant reasons:

- It lacked the support of all the world’s powerful countries, particularly the United States.
- It lacked a mechanism to act quickly to stop small conflicts from escalating into large ones.

In 1943, leaders of the United States, Great Britain, the Soviet Union, and China discussed the idea of the **United Nations (UN)**. The UN was established in 1945. (Connect: Write a paragraph comparing the United Nations with the League of Nations. See Topics 7.3 and 7.5.)

Rivalry in Economics and Politics

The existence of the United Nations did not prevent tensions from growing worse between the Soviet Union and the West. Winston Churchill’s March 1946 speech symbolized the Cold War. Churchill said that “an iron curtain has descended across the continent” of Europe. The metaphor of the **Iron Curtain** described the split between Eastern and Western Europe.

Capitalism and Communism One difference between the United States and the Soviet Union was how they organized their economies.

- In the United States, Western Europe, and other capitalist countries, economic assets, such as farms and factories, were mostly owned privately. Hence, private interests determined economic decisions. People had the freedom to act in their self-interest.
- In the Soviet Union, Eastern Europe, and other communist countries, economic assets were owned by the government. The system emphasized equality and fairness.

Democracy and Authoritarianism A second difference was how the rivals organized their political systems. In the United States, people chose their elected leaders through free elections. Further, they relied on an independent press to provide accurate information about the government and political parties to compete for votes. In the Soviet Union, elections were not significant, the press was operated by the government, and a single party dominated politics.

Criticisms and Similarities Each side pointed to what it saw as flaws in the other. In the United States, people attacked the Soviet system for restricting the rights of people to speak and worship freely, to elect their own representatives, and to allow businesses to operate efficiently. Soviets accused the United States of giving poor people the “freedom to starve” and for discriminating against African Americans and other minorities. The Soviet Union also stressed its emphasis on women’s equality as a difference between its system and that of the United States.

Despite the difference in the U.S. and Soviet models, some analysts emphasized their similarities. For example, in both, control of big economic decisions was in the hands of groups, either the government or millions of corporate shareholders. Further, both countries often acted out of fear of the other, which made the military a powerful force in each.

Conflicts in International Affairs

Each side wanted to expand its system of thought throughout the world. This competition resulted in a long-running battle for influence over the opinions of people and alliance with governments.

The USSR and Its Satellite Countries The Soviets were determined to make the governments of Eastern Europe as much like the Soviet government as possible. They therefore directed the countries of Bulgaria, East Germany, Hungary, Poland, and Romania to develop five-year economic plans focused on developing industry and collective agriculture at the expense of consumer products. All political parties other than the Communists were outlawed.

These actions allowed the USSR (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) to exploit the Eastern European nations to benefit the Soviets rather than

to help those countries grow. The **satellite countries**—small states that are economically or politically dependent on a larger, more powerful state—were forced to import only Soviet goods and to export only to the Soviet Union. Moreover, the governments of these countries were just as dictatorial as the Soviet government. (Connect: Create a graphic comparing Communist and earlier Western imperialism. See Topic 6.2.)

World Revolution Beginning with the October Revolution of 1917, the Soviet Union viewed capitalism as a threat to its power. This view was enhanced with the concept of **world revolution**, a belief that organized workers would overthrow capitalism in all countries. The Soviets supported revolutions and uprisings between 1919 and 1923 in Germany, Bavaria, Hungary, northern Italy, and Bulgaria. Soviet interference elevated Western suspicions about Soviet intentions. After World War II, growing revolutionary feelings became a serious threat to Western powers and to governments in Central and Southern Europe.

Containment U.S. diplomat George Kennan worked in the U.S. Embassy in Moscow during the 1930s and in 1946. Kennan believed that the Soviet Union would continue to expand its borders and its influence abroad if it could. He advocated a policy of **containment**—not letting communism spread farther. Some politicians criticized Kennan for accepting the status quo. They argued for a more aggressive policy of overthrowing existing regimes in order to “roll back” the spread of communism.

Truman Doctrine Kennan’s reports influenced President Harry Truman. A speech in 1947 outlined the **Truman Doctrine**, a strong statement that the United States would do what it had to do to stop the spread of communist influence, specifically in Greece and Turkey. The Soviet Union wanted to put military bases in Turkey so it could control the Dardanelles, the strait between the Black Sea and the Mediterranean Sea. In Greece, left-wing groups controlled by Communists were close to gaining control of the government. Truman pledged U.S. economic and military support to help the two countries resist this communist domination.

The Marshall Plan After World War II, the United States was deeply concerned about rebuilding Europe. The United States provided assistance to those countries soon after the war ended. However, many U.S. leaders thought more was needed to get European allies back on their feet economically. Based on the belief that a communist revolution could happen in economically unstable nations, the new goal was to rebuild Europe into a prosperous and stable region. The **Marshall Plan**, enacted in June 1947, was designed to offer \$12 billion in aid to all nations of Europe, including Germany. This money would be used to modernize industry, reduce trade barriers, and rebuild Europe’s damaged infrastructure. The plan worked. Economic output in the countries aided was 35 percent higher in 1951 than it had been in 1938.

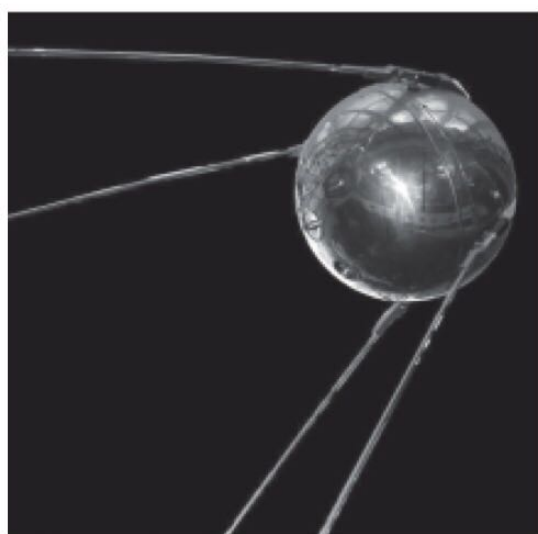
The Soviet Union and its Eastern European satellites refused to participate in the plan. Instead, in 1949, the Soviets developed their own



plan to help rebuild Eastern Europe—the **Council for Mutual Economic Assistance (COMECON)**. The scope of the organization was narrower than that of the Marshall Plan. It was limited primarily to trade and credit agreements among the six members. Its impact was modest compared to the Marshall Plan.

The Space Race and the Arms Race

Space Race In 1957, the Soviet Union launched the first artificial satellite, called *Sputnik*, into orbit around Earth, inaugurating what became known as the *Space Race*. The United States launched its first satellite in January 1958. The two nations competed to become the first with a manned satellite orbiting Earth and, later, the first to land a human on the moon.



Source: Wikimedia Commons

Replica of Sputnik 1 stored in the National Air and Space Museum.



Source: Wikimedia Commons

Launch of first U.S. satellite, Explorer 1, on January 31, 1958.

Mutual Assured Destruction (MAD) Early in 1959, the Soviets tested the first intercontinental ballistic missile (ICBM) capable of delivering a nuclear warhead into U.S. territory. The United States tested a similar missile later that same year. Both countries realized that they had become so powerful that they had reached a point of *mutual assured destruction*. That is, regardless of who started a war, both would be obliterated by the end of it. Since neither side could win a nuclear war, neither side had an incentive to start one. As long as both sides kept improving their technology, the balance of terror between them would keep the peace—everyone hoped.

The Non-Aligned Movement

Many new African and Asian countries wanted to stay out of the U.S.-Soviet Cold War. They wanted an alternative framework for international economic, political, and social order—one not dominated by the two superpowers. In



1955, Indonesia hosted a conference, known as the Bandung Conference after the city where it was held, for representatives of these countries. Delegates from China, India, and 27 other countries—representing more than half the world’s population—passed resolutions condemning colonialism. The impulse that prompted the Bandung Conference led countries to formally organize the **Non-Aligned Movement** in 1961. However, non-aligned countries faced challenges:

- Member states tried to combine support for stronger international institutions with efforts to advance their own interests. For example, Indian leader Jawaharlal Nehru supported a stronger UN, but he opposed its efforts to intervene in the conflict between India and Pakistan over control of the region of Kashmir.
- Member states often became more closely allied with one superpower or the other. When war broke out between Somalia and Ethiopia in 1977, the Soviet Union supplied aid to Ethiopia, prompting the United States to supply aid to Somalia.

| Leaders of the Non-Aligned Movement | | |
|-------------------------------------|-----------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Name | Country | Role |
| Jawaharlal Nehru | India | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Served as prime minister of India from 1947 to 1964 • Viewed as one of the most important leaders at the Bandung Conference |
| Kwame Nkrumah | Ghana | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Led Ghana to independence from Great Britain in 1957 • Advocated unity among Africans across country boundaries through the Organization of African Unity • Became one of the most respected African leaders of the post-war period |
| Gamal Abdel Nasser | Egypt | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Served three terms as president of Egypt between 1954 and 1970 • Helped negotiate compromises among people attending the Bandung Conference • Supported the Pan-Arab movement |
| Sukarno | Indonesia | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Became the first president of Indonesia in 1945 • Organized and hosted the Bandung Conference • Criticized both the United States and the USSR but accepted large amounts of aid from each |

| KEY TERMS BY THEME | | |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <p>GOVERNMENT: Global United Nations (UN) Iron Curtain satellite countries world revolution containment</p> | <p>Truman Doctrine Non-Aligned Movement</p> <p>TECHNOLOGY: Space mutual assured destruction <i>Sputnik</i></p> | <p>ECONOMICS: International Marshall Plan Council for Mutual Economic Assistance (COMECON)</p> |

Effects of the Cold War

The only thing that kept the Cold War cold was the mutual deterrence afforded by nuclear weapons.

—Chung Mong-joon, South Korean politician and business leader, 2013

Essential Question: In what ways did both the Soviet Union and the United States seek to maintain influence during the Cold War?

With the start of the Cold War, new military alliances for mutual protection formed in different parts of the world. The threat of nuclear war, as noted above by Chung Mong-joon, kept the United States and the Soviet Union from starting a war that could end in unprecedented global destruction. But **proxy wars**, such as the ones in Korea and Vietnam, resulted in millions of deaths. In a proxy war, a major power helps bring about a conflict between other nations but does not always fight directly. These conflicts underlined the political and philosophical divide between the superpowers.

The superpowers faced off in Cuba and several other Central American countries as well as in the African country of Angola. The combination of military, economic, and nuclear influence across the globe made the world a tense place for decades after World War II—the war the two superpowers had worked together to end.

Allied Occupation of Germany

The conflict among the Allies after World War II was exemplified by the debate over how to occupy the defeated country of Germany. The Allies agreed to partition the country among France, Great Britain, the United States, and the Soviet Union. The three Western Allies wanted to combine their zones into one state under democratic principles.

Berlin Blockade The Allies also decided to divide Germany's capital, Berlin, into four zones. The three Western zones would become a free city that was located within the Soviet zone of Germany. The Soviets wanted to stop these Western plans and control all of Berlin. They set up a blockade of the Western zones in Berlin to prevent the West from moving supplies into the area by land. The Western Allies did not want to risk a military confrontation with the Soviets and ultimately began the **Berlin Airlift**. Through this operation,

the Allies flew supplies into Western zones between February 1948 and May 1949, when the Soviets lifted the blockade.

Two Germanys After the blockade ended, Germany split into two states. West Germany became the Federal Republic of Germany. East Germany became the German Democratic Republic. The division of Europe into East and West was complete.

Berlin Wall As citizens of East Germany saw the prosperity and democratic lifestyle of West Germany, many wanted to move to the West. Between 1949 and 1961, about 2.5 million East Germans fled.

However, the East German and Soviet governments were determined to keep people in East Germany. They knew that the exodus to the West reflected poorly on the communist system, and it was hard on their economy. They first set up barbed-wire fences patrolled by guards along the perimeter of East Germany and between East and West Berlin. In August 1961, they began replacing the fences in Berlin with a wall, which became known as the **Berlin Wall**. Between 1961 and 1989, when the Berlin Wall fell, soldiers killed about 150 people as they tried to escape over it.

NATO, the Warsaw Pact, and Other Alliances

Only a few years after World War II ended, the Soviet Union dominated the Eastern European countries they had occupied during the war. Communist governments in those countries—buoyed by support and the direct influence of Stalin—subjected their people to the same suppression and economic system as the Soviet Union. Many Western European countries feared such a dominant communist presence on their doorstep.

Out of a desire to coordinate their defenses in case of a conflict with the Soviets, several Western nations created the **North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO)** in April 1949. The treaty pledged mutual support and cooperation within the alliance against conflicts and wars. Its original members were Belgium, Canada, Denmark, France, Great Britain, Iceland, Italy, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Norway, Portugal, and the United States. Membership in this Brussels-based organization expanded considerably in the decades after its founding.

The Soviet Union's response to NATO was the **Warsaw Pact**, created in 1955. Albania, Bulgaria, Czechoslovakia, East Germany, Hungary, Poland, Romania, and the Soviet Union were the original members. Warsaw Pact nations combined their armed forces and based their army leaders in Moscow, the capital of the Soviet Union. These nations were known as the **communist bloc**.

Two countries with communist political systems successfully resisted Soviet control. Albania, located next to Greece, joined the Warsaw Pact but withdrew in 1968. It became more closely tied to China. Yugoslavia, under the authoritarian leadership of Marshall Josip Broz Tito, never joined the Warsaw

Pact. In the 1990s, ethnic divisions caused Yugoslavia to break apart into several countries, including Slovenia, Serbia, and Croatia.

Other treaty organizations formed in an attempt to halt the spread of communism in other regions:

- In 1954, Australia, France, Great Britain, New Zealand, Pakistan, the Philippines, Thailand, and the United States formed the **Southeast Asia Treaty Organization (SEATO)**.
- The **Central Treaty Organization (CENTO)** was an anti-Soviet treaty organization formed by Great Britain, Iran, Iraq, Pakistan, and Turkey to prevent the spread of Communism in the Middle East. The United States was not a full member, but it joined CENTO'S military committee.

During the Cold War, the United States formed alliances with more than 40 states. It was sometimes easier for the United States to influence and negotiate through these smaller alliances than through the United Nations.

Proxy Wars

The ideological Cold War was accompanied by hot wars in Asia, Africa, Latin America, and the Caribbean. They were called proxy wars because the armies of smaller countries were proxies, or stand-ins, for the two superpowers. These wars often combined specific local issues, such as a battle against colonialism or for land reform (see Topic 8.4), with the international conflict over the spread of communism. Though proxy wars occurred in small countries, some resulted in millions of deaths.

Two of the biggest confrontations were the Korean War and Vietnam War in Asia. In both instances, the countries were split into northern and southern sections. In both countries, a communist government ruled the northern section.

Korean War Just as the victorious powers divided Germany after World War II, they also divided the Korean Peninsula. The Soviets occupied the north while the United States and its allies occupied the south. The **Korean War** (1950–1953) began when North Korea invaded South Korea in an attempt to reunite the country under its leadership. In response, the UN voted to defend South Korea militarily. The Soviet Union could have vetoed the resolution, but its representative was absent during the vote because the Soviet Union was boycotting all Security Council meetings in protest over a disagreement about China's seat on the Security Council.

UN military forces supporting the South Koreans came from 16 member countries, but the United States provided the largest number and the overall commander, General **Douglas MacArthur**. The Soviet Union did not send troops, but it sent money and weapons to North Korea. The UN forces pushed back the North Koreans across the inter-Korean border and drove toward North Korea's border with China. The Chinese, allies of North Korea and concerned that the UN forces would try to invade China as well, sent Chinese

troops across the border and entered the war against the United States and its allies. After three years of fighting and some four million civilian and military casualties, the war ended in a stalemate. The two parts of Korea remained divided, with a demilitarized zone in between.

Vietnam War U.S. President Dwight D. Eisenhower, following the Truman policy of containment, sent military advisers to South Vietnam to train the South Vietnamese army and to prevent a communist takeover by North Vietnam. Eisenhower's successor, President John F. Kennedy, increased the number of advisers from 1,000 to 16,000. Some U.S. citizens believed America could not afford to lose a confrontation in Vietnam. They thought a communist victory would weaken U.S. prestige around the world.

However, the United States was supporting an undemocratic and unpopular South Vietnamese ruler, Ngo Dinh Diem. In 1963, Buddhist monk Thich Quang Duc publicly set himself on fire in Saigon to protest the South Vietnamese government's favoring of Catholics over Buddhists. His protests inspired others. A military coup, with U.S. support, soon overthrew Diem.

In 1964, President **Lyndon Johnson** sent more U.S. troops to South Vietnam. Johnson believed in the **domino theory**—the idea that if one country in the region became communist, other countries would soon follow. Johnson feared that China and the Soviet Union would bring all of Southeast Asia under communist rule. (Connect: Trace foreign intervention in Southeast Asian affairs through the Vietnam War. See Topic 6.2.)

The Bay of Pigs Crisis Fidel Castro and other communist revolutionaries overthrew the Cuban dictator Fulgencio Batista in 1959. Castro soon set up a dictatorship in Cuba. On August 6, 1960, the new government started to nationalize foreign-owned industries, which was a common communist strategy. Cuba nationalized businesses and properties of the national telephone and electricity companies; Texaco, Esso, and Sinclair oil companies; and 36 sugar mills owned by U.S. firms. As a result of these economic losses for its citizens, the United States broke off trade with Cuba and cut diplomatic ties. Castro in turn accepted Soviet aid and aligned Cuba's foreign policy with that of the Soviet Union.

In 1961, newly elected U.S. President **John F. Kennedy** had grave concerns about the presence of a communist country located only 90 miles from the coast of Florida. Before Kennedy took office, a group of Cuban exiles who opposed Castro had asked for U.S. government backing to invade Cuba and overthrow Castro. Kennedy gave his support. The resulting **Bay of Pigs** invasion was a total failure. Even worse for the United States, it cemented the Cuba-Soviet alliance.

The Cuban Missile Crisis In response to the Bay of Pigs, the Soviets began to support Cuba with arms and military advisors. Soviet Premier **Nikita Khrushchev**, who came to power after Stalin, saw an opportunity in Cuba. In 1962 he shipped nuclear missiles to Cuba. Khrushchev felt justified in his actions because in the summer of 1961 the United States had placed nuclear missiles in Turkey, a U.S. ally that shared a border with the Soviet Union.



In October 1962, U.S. intelligence learned that more missiles were on their way to Cuba. Kennedy ordered the U.S. Navy to prevent the missiles from reaching Cuba. He called his action a “quarantine” because a blockade was technically an act of war. Regardless of the term, the two superpowers were on a collision course that threatened nuclear war.

Ultimately, the two leaders pulled back from the brink. Khrushchev called back the Soviet ships and removed the missiles that had been delivered to Cuba. In return, the United States pledged to quietly remove its missiles from Turkey. After this incident, leaders of both countries realized that better communication between their countries was needed. In 1963, the two countries set up a **Hot Line**, a direct telegraph/teleprinter link between the U.S. and Soviet leaders’ offices.



Source: CIA (1962)
During the Cuban Missile Crisis, U.S. planes photographed evidence of Soviet missiles and sites in San Cristobal, Cuba. The image on the right is a U-2 reconnaissance photograph, showing Soviet nuclear missiles, their transports and tents for fueling and maintenance.

Test-Ban Treaty People worldwide worried about deaths and environmental harm from nuclear war or nuclear testing. In 1963, the Soviet Union, the United States, and more than 100 other states signed the **Nuclear Test-Ban Treaty**. France and China did not sign it. This agreement outlawed testing nuclear weapons above ground, underwater, and in space. The goal was to cut down the amount of radiation that people would be exposed to as a result of weapons testing. Underground testing remained legal. In 1968, the **Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty** called on nuclear powers to prevent the spread of military nuclear technology and materials to non-nuclear countries.

Angola The Portuguese colony of Angola in southwest Africa won its independence in 1975, after 14 years of armed struggle. Like the Vietnamese, the Angolans had to fight a war to end their colonial status.

However, Angola faced greater ethnic conflict than did Vietnam. The borders of Angola, like those of many newly independent African countries, had been set by European colonial powers with little regard for traditional



regions. Rival ethnic groups were thrown together under one government. Angola was more a multiethnic empire consisting of three distinct cultural groups than a nation-state in which everyone shared a common culture. Each group had fought for independence. Each wanted to control the country's lucrative diamond mines. And each was supported by other countries:

- The USSR and Cuba backed the Mbundu tribe.
- South Africa backed the Ovimbundu tribe.
- The United States backed the Bankongo tribe.

Upon independence, civil war broke out. In 2002, after 27 years of fighting, the rivals agreed on a cease-fire. However, threats of violence from militant separatist groups remained.

Contra War In Nicaragua in 1979, the 43-year dictatorship by the Somoza family was ended by the rebel Sandinistas, who called themselves socialists. Two years later, conservative opponents of the Sandinistas, known as Contras, tried to overthrow them. From 1981 to 1988, the Contra War gripped the country. Wanting to isolate the Sandinistas, the United States heavily backed the Contras with covert support. The Contra War took the lives of tens of thousands of Nicaraguans. The war ended after the signing of the Tela Accord in 1989 and the demobilization of the Contra and Sandinista armies.

Antinuclear Weapon Movement

The nuclear arms race spawned a reaction known as the **antinuclear weapons movement**. One of the first such movements developed in Japan in 1954 in opposition to U.S. testing of nuclear weapons in the Pacific Ocean. In 1955, more than one-third of Japan's population signed a petition against nuclear weapons. In the late 1970s and early 1980s, the antinuclear weapons movement expanded to other countries, particularly to the United States and Western Europe. On June 6, 1982, some one million people demonstrated in New York City against the creation, buildup, and possible use of nuclear weapons.

| KEY TERMS BY THEME | | |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <p>GOVERNMENT: International Conflicts</p> <p>proxy war Berlin Airlift Berlin Wall Korean War Vietnam War domino theory Bay of Pigs Cuban Missile Crisis Angola Contra War</p> | <p>GOVERNMENT: Treaties</p> <p>North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) Warsaw Pact communist bloc Southeast Asia Treaty Organization (SEATO) Central Treaty Organization (CENTO) Nuclear Test Ban Treaty Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty</p> | <p>TECHNOLOGY: Military</p> <p>Hot Line</p> <p>SOCIETY: Activism</p> <p>antinuclear weapons movement</p> <p>GOVERNMENT: Leaders</p> <p>Douglas MacArthur Lyndon Johnson John F. Kennedy Nikita Khrushchev</p> |