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The Modern State and the Age of Liberalism

1945–1980

Between 1945 and 1980, the United States became the world's leading economic and military power. That development defines these decades as a distinct period of American history. Internationally, a prolonged period of tension and conflict known as the Cold War drew the United States into an engagement in world affairs unprecedented in the nation's history. Domestically, three decades of sustained economic growth, whose benefits were widely, though imperfectly, distributed, expanded the middle class and brought into being a mass consumer society. These international and domestic developments were intertwined with the predominance of liberalism in American politics and public policy. One might think of an "age of liberalism" in this era, encompassing the social-welfare liberalism that was a legacy of the New Deal and the rights liberalism of the 1960s, both of which fell under the larger umbrella of Cold War liberalism.

Global leadership abroad and economic prosperity at home were conditioned on further expansions in government power. How that power was used proved controversial. Immediately following World War II, a national security state emerged to investigate so-called subversives in the United States and, through the clandestine Central Intelligence Agency (CIA), to destabilize foreign governments abroad. Meanwhile, American troops went to war in Korea and Vietnam. At home, African Americans, women, the poor, and other social groups called for greater equality in American life and sought new laws and government initiatives to make that equality a reality. Here, in brief, are the three key dimensions of this convulsive, turbulent era.



Global Leadership and the Cold War

When the United States officially joined the combatants of World War II, it entered into an alliance with England and the Soviet Union. That alliance proved impossible to sustain after 1945, as the United States and the Soviet Union became competitors to shape postwar Europe, East Asia, and the developing world. The resulting Cold War lasted four decades, during which the United States extended its political and military reach onto every continent. Under the presidency of Harry S. Truman, American officials developed the policy of containment—a combination of economic, diplomatic, and military actions to limit the expansion of communism—that subsequent presidents embraced and expanded.

Diplomatic and military intervention abroad was a hallmark of the Cold War. Most American interventions took place in developing countries, in recently independent, decolonized nations, and in countries where nationalist movements pressed for independence. In the name of preventing the spread of communism, the United States intervened directly or indirectly in China, Iran, Guatemala, Cuba, Indonesia, and the Dominican Republic, among many other nations, and fought major wars in Korea and Vietnam. This new global role for the United States inspired support but also spurred detractors. The latter eventually included the antiwar movement during the war in Vietnam. Chapter 25 focuses on the Cold War, and Vietnam is addressed in Chapter 28.



The Age of Liberalism

In response to the Great Depression, President Franklin Roosevelt's New Deal expanded federal responsibility for the social welfare of ordinary citizens, sweeping away much of the *laissez-faire* individualism of earlier eras (see Chapter 23). Legislators from both parties embraced liberal ideas about the role of government and undertook such measures as the GI Bill, subsidies for suburban home ownership, and investment in infrastructure and education. Poverty, however, affected nearly one-third of Americans in the 1960s, and racial discrimination denied millions of nonwhites full citizenship. Lack of opportunity became a driving force in the civil rights movement and in the Great Society under President Lyndon Johnson.

Inspired by African American civil rights, other social movements sought equality based on gender, sexuality, ethnicity, and other identities. If “New Deal liberalism” had focused on social welfare, this “rights liberalism” focused on protecting people from discrimination and ensuring equal citizenship. These struggles resulted in new laws, such as the Civil Rights Act of 1964, and transformative Supreme Court decisions. Conservative opponents, however, mobilized in the 1960s against what they saw as the excesses of liberal activism. The resulting conflict began to reshape politics in the 1970s and laid the groundwork for a new conservative resurgence. These developments are discussed in Chapters 27 and 28.



Mass Consumption and the Middle Class

More than ever, the postwar American economy was driven by mass consumption and the accompanying process of suburbanization. Rising wages, increasing access to higher education, and the availability of suburban home ownership raised living standards and allowed more Americans than ever to afford consumer goods. Suburbanization transformed the nation's cities, and the Sunbelt led the nation in population growth. But the new prosperity had mixed results. Cities declined and new racial and ethnic ghettos formed. Suburbanization and mass consumption raised concerns that the nation's rivers, streams, air, and open land were being damaged, and an environmental movement arose in response. And prosperity itself proved short-lived. By the 1970s, deindustrialization had eroded much of the nation's once prosperous industrial base.

A defining characteristic of the postwar decades was the growth of the American middle class. That growth was predicated on numerous demographic changes. Home ownership increased, as did college enrollments. Women worked more outside the home and spurred a new feminism. Children enjoyed more purchasing power, and a "teen culture" arose on television, in popular music, and in film. The family became politicized, too, and by the late 1970s, liberals and conservatives were divided over how best to address the nation's family life. All these developments are discussed in Chapters 25 and 29.

The Modern State and the Age of Liberalism

1945–1980

Thematic Understanding

This timeline arranges some of the important events of this period into themes. Consider the entries under "America in the World" and "Politics and Power" across all four decades.

What connections were there between international developments and domestic politics in this era of the Cold War? ➤

	AMERICA IN THE WORLD	POLITICS AND POWER	IDENTITY	ENVIRONMENT AND GEOGRAPHY	WORK, EXCHANGE, AND TECHNOLOGY
1940	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Truman Doctrine • Israel created (1947) • Marshall Plan (1948) • Containment strategy emerges • NATO created; West Germany created (1949) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • GI Bill (1944) • Loyalty-Security Program • Taft-Hartley Act (1947) • Truman reelected (1948) • Truman's Fair Deal (1949) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>To Secure These Rights</i> (1947) • Desegregation of armed services (1948) • <i>Shelley v. Kraemer</i> (1948) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continued South-North migration of African Americans • First Levittown opens (1947) • FHA and VA subsidize suburbanization 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bretton Woods system established: World Bank, International Monetary Fund • Baby boom establishes new consumer generation
1950	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Permanent mobilization as a result of NSC-68 • Korean War (1950–1953) • Geneva Accords regarding Vietnam (1954) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cold War liberalism • McCarthyism and Red Scare • Eisenhower's presidency (1953–1961) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Brown v. Board of Education</i> (1954) • Montgomery Bus Boycott (1955) • Little Rock—Central High School desegregation battle • Southern Christian Leadership Conference founded (1957) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Disneyland opens (1955) • National Highway Act (1956) • Growth of suburbia and Sunbelt • Atomic bomb testing in Nevada and Pacific Ocean 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Treaty of Detroit (1950) • Military-industrial complex begins to rise • National Defense Education Act (1958) spurs development of technology
1960	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cuban missile crisis (1962) • Gulf of Tonkin Resolution (1964) • Johnson sends ground troops to Vietnam; war escalates (1965) • Tet offensive (1968); peace talks begin 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • John F. Kennedy's New Frontier • John F. Kennedy assassinated (1963) • Lyndon B. Johnson's landslide victory (1964) • War on Poverty; Great Society • Riots at Democratic National Convention (1968) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Greensboro sit-ins • <i>The Feminine Mystique</i> (1963) • Civil Rights and Voting Rights Acts (1964–1965) • National Organization for Women founded (1966) • Alcatraz occupation (1969) • Black Power • Student and antiwar activism 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Great Society environmental initiatives • Urban riots (1964–1968) • Kerner Commission Report (1968) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Economic boom • Government spending on Vietnam and Great Society • Medicare and Medicaid created (1965)
1970	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nixon invades Cambodia (1971) • Paris Accords end Vietnam War (1973) • Camp David Accords between Egypt and Israel (1978) • Iranian Revolution (1979) and hostage crisis (1979–1981) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Richard Nixon's landslide victory (1972) • Watergate scandal; Nixon resigns (1974) • Jimmy Carter elected president (1976) • Moral Majority founded (1979) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Equal Rights Amendment (1972) • <i>Roe v. Wade</i> (1973) • <i>Bakke v. University of California</i> (1978) • Harvey Milk assassinated (1978) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • First Earth Day (1970) • Environmental Protection Agency established (1970) • Endangered Species Act (1973) • Three Mile Island accident (1979) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Energy crisis (1973) • Inflation surges, while economy stagnates (stagflation) • Deindustrialization • Tax revolt in California (1978)

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CHAPTER

Cold War America

1945–1963

CONTAINMENT AND A DIVIDED GLOBAL ORDER

- Origins of the Cold War
- The Containment Strategy
- Containment in Asia

COLD WAR LIBERALISM

- Truman and the End of Reform
- Red Scare: The Hunt for Communists
- The Politics of Cold War Liberalism

CONTAINMENT IN THE POSTCOLONIAL WORLD

- The Cold War and Colonial Independence
- John F. Kennedy and the Cold War
- Making a Commitment in Vietnam

In the autumn of 1950, a little-known California congressman running for the Senate named Richard M. Nixon stood before reporters in Los Angeles. His opponent, Helen Gahagan Douglas, was a Hollywood actress and a New Deal Democrat. Nixon told the gathered reporters that Douglas had cast “Communist-leaning” votes and that she was “pink right down to her underwear.” Gahagan’s voting record was not much different from Nixon’s. But tarring her with communism made her seem un-American, and Nixon defeated the “pink lady” with nearly 60 percent of the vote.

A few months earlier, U.S. tanks, planes, and artillery supplies had arrived in French Indochina. A French colony since the nineteenth century, Indochina (present-day Vietnam, Laos, and Cambodia) was home to an independence movement led by Ho Chi Minh and supported by the Soviet Union and China. In the summer of 1950, President Harry S. Truman authorized \$15 million worth of military supplies to aid France, which was fighting Ho’s army to keep possession of its Indochinese empire. “Neither national independence nor democratic evolution exists in any area dominated by Soviet imperialism,” Secretary of State Dean Acheson warned ominously as he announced U.S. support for French imperialism.

Connecting these coincidental historical moments, one domestic and the other international, was a decades-old force in American life that gained renewed strength after World War II: anticommunism. The events in Los Angeles and Vietnam, however different on the surface, were part of the global geopolitical struggle between the democratic United States and the communist, authoritarian Soviet Union known as the Cold War. Beginning in Europe as World War II ended and extending to Asia, Latin America, the Middle East, and Africa by the mid-1950s, the Cold War reshaped international relations and dominated global politics for more than forty years.

In the United States, the Cold War fostered suspicion of “subversives” in government, education, and the media. The arms race that developed between the two superpowers prompted Congress to boost military expenditures. The resulting military-industrial complex enhanced the power of the corporations that built planes, munitions, and electronic devices. In politics, the Cold War stifled liberal initiatives as the New Deal coalition tried to advance its domestic agenda in the shadow of anticommunism. In these ways, the line between the international and the domestic blurred—and that blurred line was another enduring legacy of the Cold War.

IDENTIFY THE BIG IDEA

In the first two decades of the Cold War, how did competition on the international stage and a climate of fear at home affect politics, society, and culture in the United States?



It can happen Here

JOIN

CIVIL DEFENSE

JOHN SEPPERS, MILWAUKEE, 1951
Contributed in the interest

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The Perils of the Cold War Americans, like much of the world, lived under the threat of nuclear warfare during the tense years of the Cold War between the United States and the Soviet Union. This 1951 civil defense poster, with the message "It can happen Here," suggests that Americans should be prepared for such a dire outcome. © Bettmann/Corbis.

Containment and a Divided Global Order

The Cold War began on the heels of World War II and ended in 1991 with the dissolution of the Soviet Union. While it lasted, this conflict raised two critical questions at the center of global history: What conditions, and whose interests, would determine the balance of power in Europe and Asia? And how would the developing nations (the European colonies in Asia, the Middle East, and Africa) gain their independence and take their places on the world stage? Cold War rivalry framed the possible answers to both questions as it drew the United States into a prolonged engagement with world affairs, unprecedented in the nation's history, that continues to the present day.

Origins of the Cold War

World War II set the basic conditions for the Cold War. With Germany and Japan defeated and Britain and France weakened by years of war, only two geopolitical powers remained standing in 1945. Even had nothing divided them, the United States and the Soviet Union would have jostled each other as they moved to fill the

postwar power vacuum. But, of course, the two countries were divided—by geography, history, ideology, and strategic interest. Little united them other than their commitment to defeating the Axis powers. President Franklin Roosevelt understood that maintaining the U.S.-Soviet alliance was essential for postwar global stability. But he also believed that permanent peace and long-term U.S. interests depended on the Wilsonian principles of collective security, self-determination, and free trade (Chapter 21).

Yalta At the **Yalta Conference** of February 1945, Wilsonian principles yielded to U.S.-Soviet power realities. As Allied forces neared victory in Europe and advanced toward Japan in the Pacific, Roosevelt, Churchill, and Stalin met in Yalta, a resort in southern Ukraine on the Black Sea. Roosevelt focused on maintaining Allied unity and securing Stalin's commitment to enter the war against Japan. But the fates of the nations of Eastern Europe divided the Big Three. Stalin insisted that Russian national security required pro-Soviet governments in Eastern Europe. Roosevelt pressed for an agreement, the "Declaration on Liberated Europe," that guaranteed self-determination and democratic elections in Poland and neighboring countries, such as Romania and Hungary. However, given the



East Meets West

With an "East Meets West" placard providing inspiration, Private Frank B. Huff of Virginia (on the left) and a Russian soldier shake hands. Huff was one of the first four Americans to contact the Russians when the two armies met at the River Elbe (seen in the background of this photo) in eastern Germany, on April 25, 1945. The good will in evidence in the spring of 1945, as Americans and Russians alike celebrated the defeat of Nazi Germany, would within two short years be replaced by Cold War suspicion and hostility. © Bettmann/Corbis.

presence of Soviet troops in those nations, FDR had to accept a pledge from Stalin to hold “free and unfettered elections” at a future time. The three leaders also formalized their commitment to divide Germany into four administrative zones, each controlled by one of the four Allied powers, and to similarly partition the capital city, Berlin, which was located in the middle of the Soviet zone.

At Yalta, the Big Three also agreed to establish an international body to replace the discredited League of Nations. Based on plans drawn up at the 1944 Dumbarton Oaks conference in Washington, D.C., the new organization, to be known as the **United Nations**, would have both a General Assembly, in which all nations would be represented, and a Security Council composed of the five major Allied powers—the United States, Britain, France, China, and the Soviet Union—and seven other nations elected on a rotating basis. The Big Three determined that the five permanent members of the Security Council should have veto power over decisions of the General Assembly. They announced that the United Nations would convene for the first time in San Francisco on April 25, 1945.

Potsdam Following the Yalta Conference, developments over the ensuing year further hardened relations between the Soviets on one side and the Americans and British on the other. At the **Potsdam Conference** outside Berlin in July 1945, Harry Truman replaced the deceased Roosevelt. Inexperienced in world affairs and thrown into enormously complicated negotiations, Truman’s instinct was to stand up to Stalin. “Unless Russia is faced with an iron fist and strong language,” he said, “another war is in the making.” But Truman was in no position to realign events in Eastern Europe, where Soviet-imposed governments in Poland, Hungary, and Romania were backed by the Red Army and could not be eliminated by Truman’s bluster. In Poland and Romania, in particular, Stalin was determined to establish communist governments, punish wartime Nazi collaborators, and win boundary concessions that augmented Soviet territory (the Soviet leader sought eastern Polish lands for the Soviet Union and sought to make far northeastern Germany part of Poland).

Yalta and Potsdam thus set the stage for communist rule to descend over Eastern Europe. The elections called for at Yalta eventually took place in Finland, Hungary, Bulgaria, and Czechoslovakia, with varying degrees of democratic openness. Nevertheless, Stalin got the client regimes he desired in those countries and would soon exert near-complete control over their governments. Stalin’s unwillingness to honor

self-determination for nations in Eastern Europe was, from the American point of view, the precipitating event of the Cold War.

Germany represented the biggest challenge of all. American officials at Potsdam believed that a revived German economy was essential to ensuring the prosperity of democratic regimes throughout Western Europe—and to keeping ordinary Germans from turning again to Nazism. In contrast, Stalin hoped merely to extract reparations from Germany in the form of industrial machines and goods. In exchange for recognizing the new German-Polish border, Truman and Secretary of State James Byrnes convinced the Soviet leader to accept German reparations only from the Soviet zone, which lay in the far eastern, and largely rural, portion of Germany and promised little wealth or German industry to plunder. As they had done for Europe as a whole, the Yalta and Potsdam agreements paved the way for the division of Germany into East and West (Map 25.1).

Yalta and Potsdam had demonstrated that in private negotiations the United States and the Soviet Union had starkly different objectives. Subsequent public utterances only intensified those differences. In February 1946, Stalin delivered

a speech in which he insisted that, according to Marxist-Leninist principles, “the unevenness of development of the capitalist countries” was likely to produce “violent disturbance” and even another war. He seemed

to blame any future war on the capitalist West. Churchill responded in kind a month later. While visiting Truman in Missouri to be honored for his wartime leadership, Churchill accused Stalin of raising an “iron curtain” around Eastern Europe and allowing “police government” to rule its people. He went further, claiming that “a fraternal association of English-speaking peoples,” and not Russians, ought to set the terms of the postwar world.

The cities and fields of Europe had barely ceased to run with the blood of World War II before they were menaced again by the tense standoff between the Soviet Union and the United States. With Stalin intent on establishing client states in Eastern Europe and the United States equally intent on reviving Germany and ensuring collective security throughout Europe, the points of agreement were few and far between. Among the Allies, anxiety about a Nazi victory in World War II had been quickly replaced by fear of a potentially more cataclysmic war with the Soviet Union.

UNDERSTAND POINTS OF VIEW

How did American and Soviet viewpoints differ over the postwar fate of Europe?



MAP 25.1
Cold War in Europe, 1955

This map vividly shows the Cold War division of Europe. The NATO countries (colored green) are allies of the United States; the Warsaw Pact countries (in purple) are allied to the USSR. At that point, West Germany had just been admitted to NATO, completing Europe's stabilization into two rival camps. But Berlin remained divided, and one can see from its location deep in East Germany why the former capital was always a flash point in Cold War controversies.

The Containment Strategy

In the late 1940s, American officials developed a clear strategy toward the Soviet Union that would become known as **containment**. Convinced that the USSR was methodically expanding its reach, the United States would counter by limiting Stalin's influence to Eastern Europe while reconstituting democratic governments in Western Europe. In 1946–1947, three specific issues worried Truman and his advisors. First, the Soviet Union was pressing Iran for access to oil and Turkey for access to the Mediterranean. Second, a civil war was roiling in Greece, between monarchists backed by England and insurgents supported by the Greek and

Yugoslavian Communist parties. Third, as European nations suffered through terrible privation in 1946 and 1947, Communist parties gained strength, particularly in France and Italy. All three developments, as seen from the United States, threatened to expand the influence of the Soviet Union outside of Eastern Europe.

Toward an Uneasy Peace In this anxious context, the strategy of containment emerged in a series of incremental steps between 1946 and 1949. In February 1946, American diplomat George F. Kennan first proposed the idea in an 8,000-word cable—a confidential message to the U.S. State Department—from his post at the U.S. embassy in Moscow. Kennan argued that the

Soviet Union was an “Oriental despotism” and that communism was merely the “fig leaf” justifying Soviet aggression. A year after writing this cable (dubbed the Long Telegram), he published an influential *Foreign Affairs* article, arguing that the West’s only recourse was to meet the Soviets “with unalterable counter-force at every point where they show signs of encroaching upon the interests of a peaceful and stable world.” Kennan called for “long-term, patient but firm and vigilant containment of Russian expansive tendencies.” *Containment*, the key word, came to define America’s evolving strategic stance toward the Soviet Union.



To see a longer excerpt of the Long Telegram, along with other primary sources from this period, see *Sources for America’s History*.

Kennan believed that the Soviet system was inherently unstable and would eventually collapse. Containment would work, he reasoned, as long as the United States and its allies opposed Soviet expansion in all parts of the world. Kennan’s attentive readers included Stalin himself, who quickly obtained a copy of the classified Long Telegram. The Soviet leader saw the United States as an imperialist aggressor determined to replace Great Britain as the world’s dominant capitalist power. Just as Kennan thought that the Soviet system was despotic and unsustainable, Stalin believed that the West suffered from its own fatal weaknesses. Neither side completely understood or trusted the other, and each projected its worst fears onto the other.

In fact, Britain’s influence in the world was declining. Exhausted by the war, facing enormous budget deficits and a collapsing economy at home, and confronted with a determined independence movement in India led by Mohandas Gandhi and growing nationalist movements throughout its empire, Britain was waning as a global power. “The reins of world leadership are fast slipping from Britain’s competent but now very weak hands,” read a U.S. State Department report. “These reins will be picked up either by the United States or by Russia.” The United States was wedded to the notion—dating to the Wilson administration—that communism and capitalism were incompatible on the world stage. With Britain faltering, American officials saw little choice but to fill its shoes.

It did not take long for the reality of Britain’s decline to resonate across the Atlantic. In February 1947, London informed Truman that it could no longer afford to support the anticommunists in the Greek civil war. Truman worried that a communist victory in Greece would lead to Soviet domination of the eastern

Mediterranean and embolden Communist parties in France and Italy. In response, the president announced what became known as the **Truman Doctrine**. In a speech on March 12, he asserted an American responsibility “to support free peoples who are resisting attempted subjugation by armed minorities or by outside pressures.” To that end, Truman proposed large-scale assistance for Greece and Turkey (then involved in a dispute with the Soviet Union over the Dardanelles, a strait connecting the Aegean Sea and the Sea of Marmara). “If we falter in our leadership, we may endanger the peace of the world,” Truman declared (*Thinking Like a Historian*, p. 810). Despite the open-endedness of this military commitment, Congress quickly approved Truman’s request for \$300 million in aid to Greece and \$100 million for Turkey.

Soviet expansionism was part of a larger story. Europe was sliding into economic chaos. Already devastated by the war, in 1947 the continent suffered the worst winter in memory. People were starving, credit was nonexistent, wages were stagnant, and the consumer market had collapsed. For both humanitarian and practical reasons, Truman’s advisors believed something had to be done. A global depression might ensue if the European economy, the largest foreign market for American goods, did not recover. Worse, unemployed and dispirited Western Europeans might fill the ranks of the Communist Party, threatening political stability and the legitimacy of the United States. Secretary of State George C. Marshall came up with a remarkable proposal: a massive infusion of American capital to rebuild the European economy. Speaking at the Harvard University commencement in June 1947, Marshall urged the nations of Europe to work out a comprehensive recovery program based on U.S. aid.

This pledge of financial assistance required congressional approval, but the plan ran into opposition in Washington. Republicans castigated the **Marshall Plan** as a huge “international WPA.” But in the midst of the congressional stalemate, on February 25, 1948, Stalin supported a communist-led coup in Czechoslovakia. Congress rallied and voted overwhelmingly in 1948 to approve the Marshall Plan. Over the next four years, the United States contributed nearly \$13 billion to a highly successful recovery effort that benefitted both Western Europe and the United States. European industrial production increased by 64 percent, and the appeal of Communist parties waned in the West. Markets for American goods grew stronger

PLACE EVENTS IN CONTEXT

Why did the United States enact the Marshall Plan, and how did the program illustrate America’s new role in the world?



The Global Cold War

Until 1950, the U.S. policy of containment was confined to economic measures, such as financial assistance to Greece and Turkey and the Marshall Plan, and focused on Europe. That changed between 1950 and 1954. In those years, containment became militarized, and its scope was expanded to include Asia and Latin America. What had begun as a limited policy to contain Soviet influence in war-torn Europe had by the mid-1950s become a global campaign against communism and social revolution.

1. President Harry S. Truman, address before joint session of Congress, March 12, 1947. Known as the Truman Doctrine, this speech outlined Truman's plan to give large-scale assistance to Greece and Turkey as part of a broader anticommunist policy.

To ensure the peaceful development of nations, free from coercion, the United States has taken a leading part in establishing the United Nations. The United Nations is designed to make possible lasting freedom and independence for all its members. We shall not realize our objectives, however, unless we are willing to help free peoples to maintain their free institutions and their national integrity against aggressive movements that seek to impose upon them totalitarian regimes. . . .

At the present moment in world history nearly every nation must choose between alternative ways of life. The choice is too often not a free one.

One way of life is based upon the will of the majority, and is distinguished by free institutions, representative government, free elections, guarantees of individual liberty, freedom of speech and religion, and freedom from political oppression.

The second way of life is based upon the will of a minority forcibly imposed upon the majority. It relies upon terror and oppression, a controlled press and radio; fixed elections, and the suppression of personal freedoms.

I believe that it must be the policy of the United States to support free peoples who are resisting attempted subjugation by armed minorities or by outside pressures.

I believe that we must assist free peoples to work out their own destinies in their own way.

I believe that our help should be primarily through economic and financial aid which is essential to economic stability and orderly political processes.

2. Syngman Rhee, president of South Korea, criticizing U.S. policy in 1950. *The Korean War, 1950–1953, represented the militarization of the Truman Doctrine.*

A few days ago one American friend said that if the U.S. gave weapons to South Korea, she feared that South Korea would invade North Korea. This is a useless worry of some Americans, who do not know South Korea. Our present war is not a Cold War, but a real shooting war. Our troops will take all possible counter-measures. . . . In South Korea the U.S. has one foot in South Korea and one foot outside so that in case of an unfavorable situation it could pull out of the country. I daresay that if the U.S. wants to aid our country, it should not be only lip-service.

3. Secretary of State Dean Acheson's testimony before the Senate Armed Forces and Foreign Relations Committee, 1951.

The attack on Korea was . . . a challenge to the whole system of collective security, not only in the Far East, but everywhere in the world. It was a threat to all nations newly arrived at independence. . . .

This was a test which would decide whether our collective security system would survive or would crumble. It would determine whether other nations would be intimidated by this show of force. . . .

As a people we condemn aggression of any kind. We reject appeasement of any kind. If we stood with our arms folded while Korea was swallowed up, it would have meant abandoning our principles, and it would have meant the defeat of the collective security system on which our own safety ultimately depends.

4. Shigeru Yoshida, prime minister of Japan, speech before the Japanese Diet (parliament), July 14, 1950.

It is heartening . . . that America and so many members of the United Nations have gone to the rescue of an invaded country regardless of the heavy sacrifices involved. In case a war breaks out on an extensive scale how would Japan's security be preserved [since we are disarmed]? . . . This has been hotly discussed. However, the measures taken by the United Nations have done much to stabilize our people's minds.

5. **John Foster Dulles, secretary of state (1953–1959), June 30, 1954, radio and television address to the American people.** In 1951, Jacobo Arbenz was elected president of Guatemala. Arbenz pursued reform policies that threatened large landholders, including the United Fruit Company. In 1954, the United States CIA engineered a coup that overthrew Arbenz and replaced him with Carlos Castillo Armas, a colonel in the Guatemalan military.

Tonight I should like to speak with you about Guatemala. It is the scene of dramatic events. They expose the evil purpose of the Kremlin to destroy the inter-American system, and they test the ability of the American States to maintain the peaceful integrity of the hemisphere.

For several years international communism has been probing here and there for nesting places in the Americas. It finally chose Guatemala as a spot which it could turn into an official base from which to breed subversion which would extend to other American Republics.

This intrusion of Soviet despotism was, of course, a direct challenge to our Monroe Doctrine, the first and most fundamental of our foreign policies.

6. **Guillermo Toriello, Guatemalan foreign minister, speech to delegates at the Tenth Inter-American Conference of the Organization of American States in Caracas, Venezuela, March 5, 1954.**

What is the real and effective reason for describing our government as communist? From what sources comes the accusation that we threaten continental solidarity and security? Why do they [United States] wish to intervene in Guatemala?

The answers are simple and evident. The plan of national liberation being carried out with firmness by my government has necessarily affected the privileges of the foreign enterprises that are impeding the progress and the economic development of the country. . . . With construction of publically owned ports and docks, we are putting an end to the monopoly of the United Fruit Company. . . .

They wanted to find a ready expedient to maintain the economic dependence of the American Republics and suppress the legitimate desires of their peoples, cataloguing as “communism” every manifestation of nationalism or economic independence, any desire for social progress, any intellectual curiosity, and any interest in progressive and liberal reforms.

7. **Herblock cartoon from the *Washington Post*, February 11, 1962.** Many Latin American countries were beset by a wide gap between a small wealthy elite and the mass of ordinary, much poorer citizens. American officials worried that this made social revolution an attractive alternative for those at the bottom.



A 1962 Herblock Cartoon, by The Herb Block Foundation.

Sources: (1) The Avalon Project at avalon.law.yale.edu; (2) Reinhard Drifte, “Japan’s Involvement in the Korean War,” in *The Korean War in History*, ed. James Cotton and Ian Neary (Atlantic Highlands, NJ: Humanities Press International, 1989), 43; (3) Glenn D. Paige, *The Korean Decision* (New York: The Free Press, 1968), 175–176; (4) Drifte, 122; (5) Jonathan L. Fried et al., eds., *Guatemala in Rebellion: Unfinished History* (New York: Grove Press, 1983), 78; (6) Stephen C. Schlesinger and Stephen Kinzer, *Bitter Fruit: The Untold Story of the American Coup in Guatemala* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1982), 143–144.

ANALYZING THE EVIDENCE

1. In source 1, Truman presents the choice facing the world in stark terms: totalitarianism or democracy. Why would he frame matters in this way in 1947? How did Truman anticipate the militarization of American foreign policy?
2. Analyze the audience, purpose, and point of view presented in the documents dealing with the war in Korea (sources 2–4). What does Acheson mean by “collective security”? Why is Yoshida thankful for the UN intervention? What can you infer about U.S. involvement in world affairs during the postwar period based on these documents?
3. In document 6, how does Toriello characterize accusations that the elected Guatemalan government is communist? What are his accusations of the United States?
4. How does source 7 express one of the obstacles to democracy in developing nations?

PUTTING IT ALL TOGETHER

Using these documents, and based on what you have learned in class and in this chapter, write an essay in which you analyze the goals of American foreign policy during the early years of the Cold War.



The Marshall Plan

Officials from the United States and Britain watch as the first shipment of Caribbean sugar provided under the Marshall Plan arrives in England, lowered from the decks of the *Royal Victoria*. Passed by Congress in 1948, the Marshall Plan (known officially as the European Recovery Program) committed the United States to spend \$17 billion over a four-year period to assist the war-ravaged nations of Western Europe. Marshall Plan funds helped the struggling British, French, and especially German economies, but they also benefitted the United States itself: the plan required European nations who participated to purchase most of their goods from American companies. Keystone/Getty Images.

and fostered economic interdependence between Europe and the United States. Notably, however, the Marshall Plan intensified Cold War tensions. U.S. officials invited the Soviets to participate but insisted on certain restrictions that would virtually guarantee Stalin's refusal. When Stalin refused, ordering Soviet client states to do so as well, the onus of dividing Europe appeared to fall on the Soviet leader and deprived his threadbare partners of assistance they sorely needed.

East and West in the New Europe The flash point for a hot war remained Germany, the most important industrial economy and the key strategic landmass in Europe. When no agreement could be reached to unify

the four zones of occupation into a single state, the Western allies consolidated their three zones in 1947. They then prepared to establish an independent federal German republic. Marshall Plan funds would jumpstart economic recovery. Some of those funds were slated for West Berlin, in hopes of making the city a capitalist showplace 100 miles deep inside the Soviet zone.

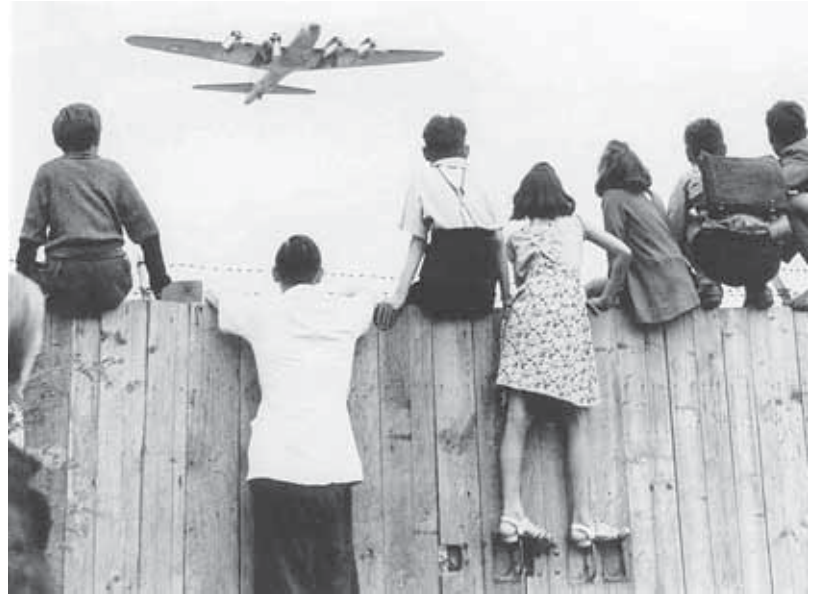
Stung by the West's intention to create a German republic, in June 1948 Stalin blockaded all traffic to West Berlin. Instead of yielding, as Stalin had expected, Truman and the British were resolute. "We are going to stay, period," Truman said plainly. Over the next year, American and British pilots, who had been dropping bombs on Berlin only four years earlier, improvised the Berlin Airlift, which flew 2.5 million tons of food and fuel into the Western zones of the city—nearly a ton for each resident. Military officials reported to Truman that General Lucius D. Clay, the American commander in Berlin, was nervous and on edge, "drawn as tight as a steel spring." But after a prolonged stalemate, Stalin backed down: on May 12, 1949, he lifted the blockade. Until the Cuban missile crisis in 1962, the Berlin crisis was the closest the two sides came to actual war, and West Berlin became a symbol of resistance to communism.

The crisis in Berlin persuaded Western European nations to forge a collective security pact with the United States. In April 1949, for the first time since the end of the American Revolution, the United States entered into a peacetime military alliance, the **North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO)**. Under the NATO pact, twelve nations—Belgium, Canada, Denmark, France, Great Britain, Iceland, Italy, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Norway, Portugal, and the United States—agreed that "an armed attack against one or more of them in Europe or North America shall be considered an attack against them all." In May 1949, those nations also agreed to the creation of the Federal Republic of Germany (West Germany), which eventually joined NATO in 1955. In response, the Soviet Union established the German Democratic Republic (East Germany); the Council for Mutual Economic Assistance (COMECON); and, in 1955, the **Warsaw Pact**, a military alliance for Eastern Europe that included Albania, Bulgaria, Czechoslovakia, East Germany, Hungary, Poland, Romania, and the Soviet Union. In these parallel steps, the two superpowers had institutionalized the Cold War through a massive division of the continent.

By the early 1950s, West and East were the stark markers of the new Europe. As Churchill had observed

The Berlin Airlift

For 321 days U.S. planes like this one flew missions to bring food and other supplies to Berlin after the Soviet Union had blocked all surface routes into the former German capital. The blockade was finally lifted on May 12, 1949, after the Soviets conceded that it had been a failure. AP Images.



in 1946, the line dividing the two stretched “from Stettin in the Baltic to Trieste in the Adriatic,” cutting off tens of millions of Eastern Europeans from the rest of the continent. Stalin’s tactics had often been ruthless, but they were not without reason. The Soviet Union acted out of the sort of self-interest that had long defined powerful nations — ensuring a defensive perimeter of allies, seeking access to raw materials, and pressing the advantage that victory in war allowed.

NSC-68 Atomic developments, too, played a critical role in the emergence of the Cold War. As the sole nuclear power at the end of World War II, the United States entertained the possibility of international control of nuclear technology but did not wish to lose its advantage over the Soviet Union. When the American Bernard Baruch proposed United Nations oversight of atomic energy in 1946, for instance, the plan assured the United States of near-total control of the technology, which further increased Cold War tensions. America’s brief tenure as sole nuclear power ended in September 1949, however, when the Soviet Union detonated an atomic bomb. Truman then turned to the U.S. National Security Council (NSC), established by the National Security Act of 1947, for a strategic reassessment.

In April 1950, the NSC delivered its report, known as **NSC-68**. Bristling with alarmist rhetoric, the document marked a decisive turning point in the U.S. approach to the Cold War. The report’s authors described the Soviet Union not as a typical great power but as one with a “fanatic faith” that seeks to “impose its absolute authority.” Going beyond even the stern

language used by George Kennan, NSC-68 cast Soviet ambitions as nothing short of “the domination of the Eurasian landmass.”

To prevent that outcome, the report proposed “a bold and massive program of rebuilding the West’s defensive potential to surpass that of the Soviet world” (*America Compared*, p. 814). This included the development of a hydrogen bomb, a thermonuclear device that would be a thousand times more destructive than the atomic bombs dropped on Japan, as well as dramatic increases in conventional military forces. Critically, NSC-68 called for Americans to pay higher taxes to support the new military program and to accept whatever sacrifices were necessary to achieve national unity of purpose against the Soviet enemy. Many historians see the report as having “militarized” the American approach to the Cold War, which had to that point relied largely on economic measures such as aid to Greece and the Marshall Plan. Truman was reluctant to commit to a major defense buildup, fearing that it would overburden the national budget. But shortly after NSC-68 was completed, events in Asia led him to reverse course.

Containment in Asia

As with Germany, American officials believed that restoring Japan’s economy, while limiting its military influence, would ensure prosperity and contain communism in East Asia. After dismantling Japan’s military, American occupation forces under General Douglas MacArthur drafted a democratic constitution and



Arming for the Cold War

To fight the Cold War, the United States and the Soviet Union increased overall military spending and assembled massive arsenals of nuclear weapons.

TABLE 25.1

Worldwide Nuclear Stockpiles, 1945–1975

Country	1945	1955	1965	1975
United States	2	3,057	32,135	27,235
USSR	0	200	6,129	19,443
United Kingdom	0	10	310	350
France	0	0	32	188
China	0	0	5	185
Israel	0	0	0	20*

*Estimated

SOURCES: Adapted from *Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists*, National Resources Defense Council, and *Nuclear Weapons and Nonproliferation* (2007).

QUESTIONS FOR ANALYSIS

1. Do you see evidence of the effects of NSC-68 in this table? What kinds of changes did NSC-68 bring about?
2. In what ways does the data in this table suggest the emergence of two “superpowers” after World War II?

paved the way for the restoration of Japanese sovereignty in 1951. Considering the scorched-earth war that had just ended, this was a remarkable achievement, thanks partly to the imperious MacArthur but mainly to the Japanese, who embraced peace and accepted U.S. military protection. However, events on the mainland of Asia proved much more difficult for the United States to shape to its advantage.

Civil War in China A civil war had been raging in China since the 1930s as Communist forces led by Mao Zedong (Mao Tse-tung) fought Nationalist forces under Jiang Jieshi (Chiang Kai-shek). Fearing a Communist victory, between 1945 and 1949 the United States provided \$2 billion to Jiang’s army. Pressing

forces held the advantage. Truman reasoned that to save Jiang, the United States would have to intervene militarily. Unwilling to do so, he cut off aid and left the Nationalists to their fate. The People’s Republic of China was formally established under Mao on October 1, 1949, and the remnants of Jiang’s forces fled to Taiwan.

Both Stalin and Truman expected Mao to take an independent line, as the Communist leader Tito had just done in Yugoslavia. Mao, however, aligned himself with the Soviet Union, partly out of fear that the United States would re-arm the Nationalists and invade the mainland. As attitudes hardened, many Americans viewed Mao’s success as a defeat for the United States. The pro-Nationalist “China lobby” accused Truman’s State Department of being responsible for the “loss” of China. Sensitive to these charges, the Truman administration refused to recognize “Red China” and blocked China’s admission to the United Nations. But the United States pointedly declined to guarantee Taiwan’s independence, and in fact accepted the outcome on the

COMPARE AND CONTRAST

How did U.S. containment strategy in Asia compare to containment in Europe?

Truman to “save” China, conservative Republican Ohio senator Robert A. Taft predicted that “the Far East is ultimately even more important to our future peace than is Europe.” By 1949, Mao’s

Communist China

People in Beijing raise their clenched fists in a welcoming salute for Chinese Communist forces entering the city after the Nationalists surrendered on January 31, 1949. The center portrait behind them is of General Mao Zedong, the leader of the Communist Party of China. Mao's victory in the civil war (1946–1950) meant that from East Germany to the Pacific Ocean, much of the Eurasian landmass (including Eastern Europe, the Soviet Union, and China) was ruled by Communist governments.

AP Images.



mainland. (Since 1982, however, the United States has recognized Taiwanese sovereignty.)

The Korean War The United States took a stronger stance in Korea. The United States and the Soviet Union had agreed at the close of World War II to occupy the Korean peninsula jointly, temporarily

dividing the former Japanese colony at the 38th parallel. As tensions rose in Europe, the 38th parallel hardened into a permanent demarcation line. The Soviets supported a Communist government, led by Kim Il Sung, in North Korea; the United States backed a right-wing Nationalist, Syngman Rhee, in South Korea. The two sides had waged low-level war since 1945, and

The Korean War

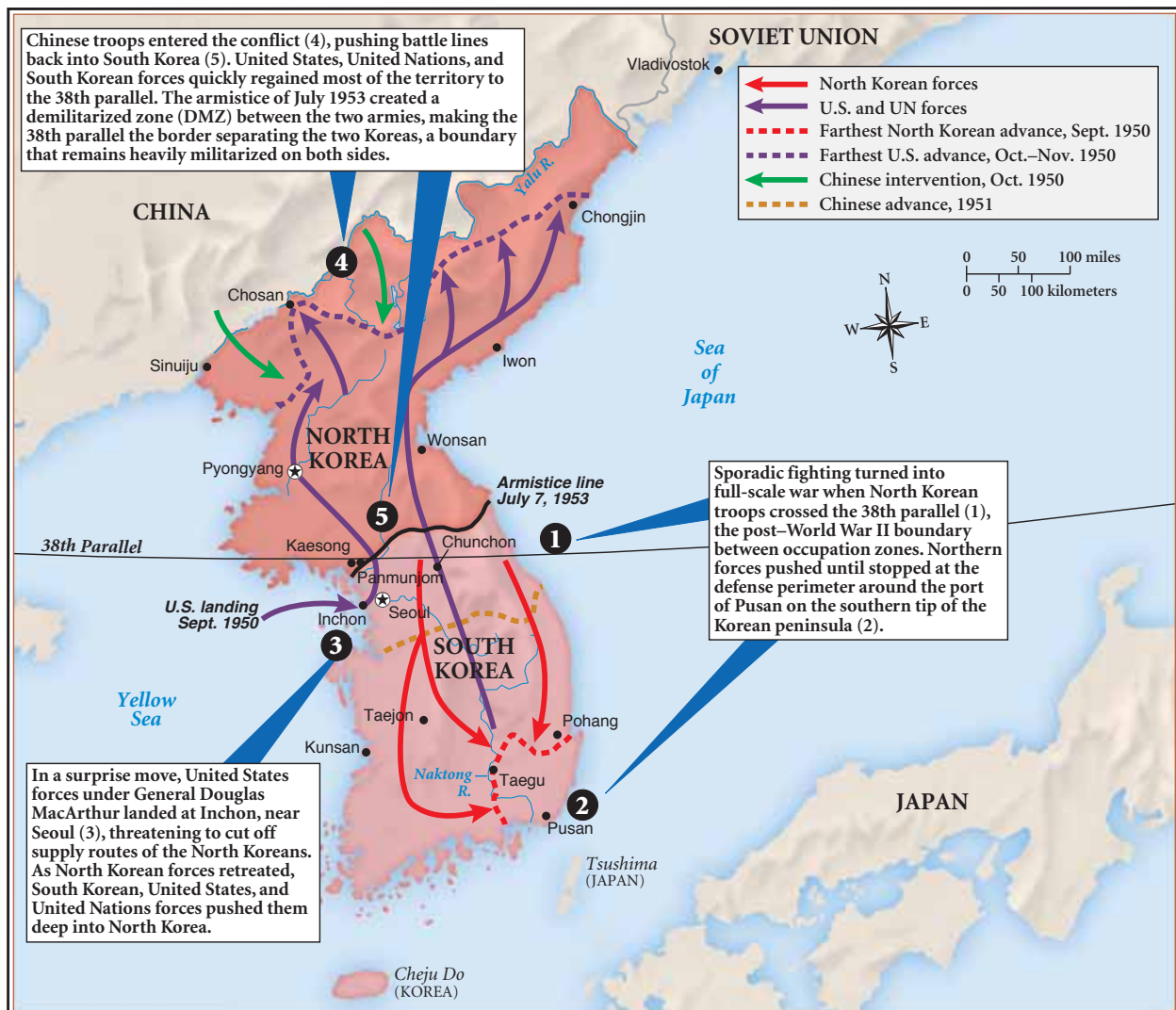
As a result of President Truman's 1948 Executive Order 9981, for the first time in the nation's history all troops in the Korean War served in racially integrated combat units. This photo taken during the Battle of Ch'ongch'on in 1950 shows a sergeant and his men of the 2nd Infantry Division. National Archives.



both leaders were spoiling for a more definitive fight. However, neither Kim nor Rhee could launch an all-out offensive without the backing of his sponsor. Washington repeatedly said no, and so did Moscow. But Kim continued to press Stalin to permit him to reunify the nation. Convinced by the North Koreans that victory would be swift, the Soviet leader finally relented in the late spring of 1950.

On June 25, 1950, the North Koreans launched a surprise attack across the 38th parallel (Map 25.2). Truman immediately asked the UN Security Council

to authorize a “police action” against the invaders. The Soviet Union was boycotting the Security Council to protest China’s exclusion from the United Nations and could not veto Truman’s request. With the Security Council’s approval of a “peacekeeping force,” Truman ordered U.S. troops to Korea. The rapidly assembled UN army in Korea was overwhelmingly American, with General Douglas MacArthur in command. At first, the North Koreans held a distinct advantage, but MacArthur’s surprise amphibious attack at Inchon gave the UN forces control of Seoul, the South Korean



MAP 25.2

The Korean War, 1950–1953

The Korean War, which the United Nations officially deemed a “police action,” lasted three years and cost the lives of more than 36,000 U.S. troops. South and North Korean deaths were estimated at more than 900,000. Although hostilities ceased in 1953, the South Korean Military (with U.S. military assistance) and the North Korean Army continue to face each other across the demilitarized zone, more than fifty years later.

capital, and almost all the territory up to the 38th parallel.

The impetuous MacArthur then ordered his troops across the 38th parallel and led them all the way to the Chinese border at the Yalu River. It was a major blunder, certain to draw China into the war. Sure enough, a massive Chinese counterattack forced MacArthur's forces into headlong retreat back down the Korean peninsula. Then stalemate set in. With weak public support for the war in the United States, Truman and his advisors decided to work for a negotiated peace. MacArthur disagreed and denounced the Korean stalemate, declaring, "There is no substitute for victory." On April 11, 1951, Truman relieved MacArthur of his command. Truman's decision was highly unpopular, especially among conservative Republicans, but he had likely saved the nation from years of costly warfare with China.

Notwithstanding MacArthur's dismissal, the war dragged on for more than two years. An armistice in July 1953, pushed by the newly elected president,

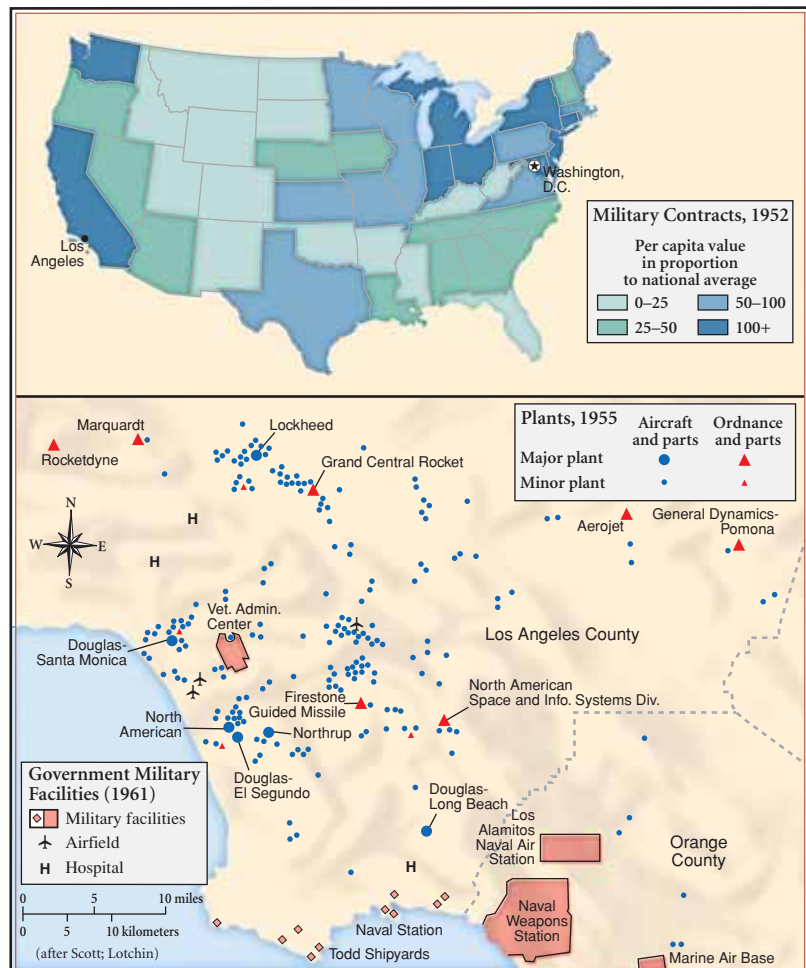
Dwight D. Eisenhower, left Korea divided at the original demarcation line. North Korea remained firmly allied with the Soviet Union; South Korea signed a mutual defense treaty with the United States. It had been the first major proxy battle of the Cold War, in which the Soviet Union and United States took sides in a civil conflict. It would not be the last.

The Korean War had far-reaching consequences. Truman's decision to commit troops without congressional approval set a precedent for future undeclared wars. His refusal to unleash atomic bombs, even when American forces were reeling under a massive Chinese attack, set ground rules for Cold War conflict. The war also expanded American involvement in Asia, transforming containment into a truly global policy—and significantly boosting Japan's struggling postwar economy. Finally, the Korean War ended Truman's resistance to a major military buildup. Defense expenditures grew from \$13 billion in 1950, roughly one-third of the federal budget, to \$50 billion in 1953, nearly two-thirds of the budget (Map 25.3). American

MAP 25.3

The Military-Industrial Complex

Defense spending gave a big boost to the Cold War economy, but, as the upper map suggests, the benefits were by no means equally distributed. The big winners were the Middle Atlantic states, the industrialized Upper Midwest, Washington State (with its aircraft and nuclear plants), and California. The epicenter of California's military-industrial complex was Los Angeles, which, as is evident in the lower map, was studded with military facilities and major defense contractors like Douglas Aircraft, Lockheed, and General Dynamics. There was work aplenty for engineers and rocket scientists.



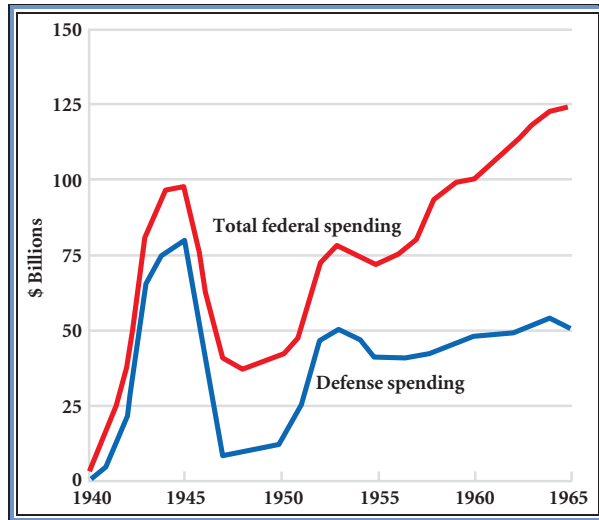


FIGURE 25.1
National Defense Spending, 1940–1965

In 1950, the U.S. defense budget was \$13 billion, less than a third of total federal outlays. In 1961, U.S. defense spending reached \$47 billion, fully half of the federal budget and almost 10 percent of the gross domestic product.

foreign policy had become more global, more militarized, and more expensive (Figure 25.1). Even in times of peace, the United States now functioned in a state of permanent military mobilization.

The Munich Analogy Behind much of U.S. foreign policy in the first two decades of the Cold War lay the memory of appeasement (Chapter 24). The generation of politicians and officials who designed the containment strategy had come of age in the shadow of Munich, the conference in 1938 at which the Western democracies had appeased Hitler by offering him part of Czechoslovakia, paving the road to World War II. Applying the lessons of Munich, American presidents believed that “appeasing” Stalin (and subsequent Soviet rulers Nikita Khrushchev and Leonid Brezhnev) would have the same result: wider war. Thus in Germany, Greece, and Korea, and later in Iran, Guatemala, and Vietnam, the United States staunchly resisted the Soviets—or what it perceived as Soviet influence. The Munich analogy strengthened the U.S. position in a number of strategic conflicts, particularly over the fate of Germany. But it also drew Americans into armed conflicts—and convinced them to support repressive, right-wing regimes—that compromised, as much as supported, stated American principles.

Cold War Liberalism

Harry Truman cast himself in the mold of his predecessor, Franklin Roosevelt, and hoped to seize the possibilities afforded by victory in World War II to expand the New Deal at home. But the crises in

postwar Europe and Asia, combined with the spectacular rise of anticommunism in the United States, forced him to take a different path. In the end, Truman went down in history not as a New Dealer, but as a Cold Warrior. The Cold War consensus that he ultimately embraced—the notion that resisting communism at home and abroad represented America’s most important postwar objective—shaped the nation’s life and politics for decades to come.

Truman and the End of Reform

Truman and the Democratic Party of the late 1940s and early 1950s forged what historians call **Cold War liberalism**. They preserved the core programs of the New Deal welfare state, developed the containment policy to oppose Soviet influence throughout the world, and fought so-called subversives at home. But there would be no second act for the New Deal. The Democrats adopted this combination of moderate liberal policies and anticommunism—Cold War liberalism—partly by choice and partly out of necessity. A few high-level espionage scandals and the Communist victories in Eastern Europe and China reenergized the Republican Party, which forced Truman and the Democrats to retreat to what historian Arthur Schlesinger called the “vital center” of American politics. However, Americans on both the progressive left and the conservative right remained dissatisfied with this development. Cold War liberalism was a practical centrist policy for a turbulent era. But it would not last.

Organized labor remained a key force in the Democratic Party and played a central role in championing

Cold War liberalism. Stronger than ever, union membership swelled to more than 14 million by 1945. Determined to make up for their wartime sacrifices, unionized workers made aggressive demands and mounted major strikes in the automobile, steel, and coal industries after the war. Republicans responded. They gained control of the House in a sweeping repudiation of Democrats in 1946 and promptly passed — over Truman’s veto — the **Taft-Hartley Act** (1947), an overhaul of the 1935 National Labor Relations Act.

Taft-Hartley crafted changes in procedures and language that, over time, weakened the right of workers to organize and engage in collective bargaining. Unions especially disliked Section 14b, which allowed states to pass “right-to-work” laws prohibiting the union shop. Additionally, the law forced unions to purge communists, who had been among the most successful labor organizers in the 1930s, from their ranks. Taft-Hartley effectively “contained” the labor movement. Trade unions would continue to support the Democratic Party, but the labor movement would not move into the largely non-union South and would not extend into the many American industries that remained unorganized.

The 1948 Election Democrats would have dumped Truman in 1948 had they found a better candidate. But

the party fell into disarray. The left wing split off and formed the Progressive Party, nominating Henry A. Wallace, an avid New Dealer whom Truman had fired as secretary of commerce in 1946 because Wallace opposed America’s actions in the Cold War. A right-wing challenge came from the South. When northern liberals such as Mayor Hubert H. Humphrey of Minneapolis pushed through a strong civil rights platform at the Democratic convention, the southern delegations bolted and, calling themselves Dixiecrats, nominated for president South Carolina governor Strom Thurmond, an ardent supporter of racial segregation.

The Republicans meanwhile renominated Thomas E. Dewey, the politically moderate governor of New York who had run a strong campaign against FDR in 1944.

Truman surprised everyone. He launched a strenuous cross-country speaking tour and hammered away at the Republicans for opposing progressive legislation and, in general, for running a “do-nothing” Congress. By combining these issues with attacks on the Soviet menace abroad, Truman began to salvage his troubled campaign. At his rallies, enthusiastic listeners shouted, “Give ‘em hell, Harry!” Truman won, receiving 49.6 percent of the vote to Dewey’s 45.1 percent (Map 25.4).

PLACE EVENTS IN CONTEXT

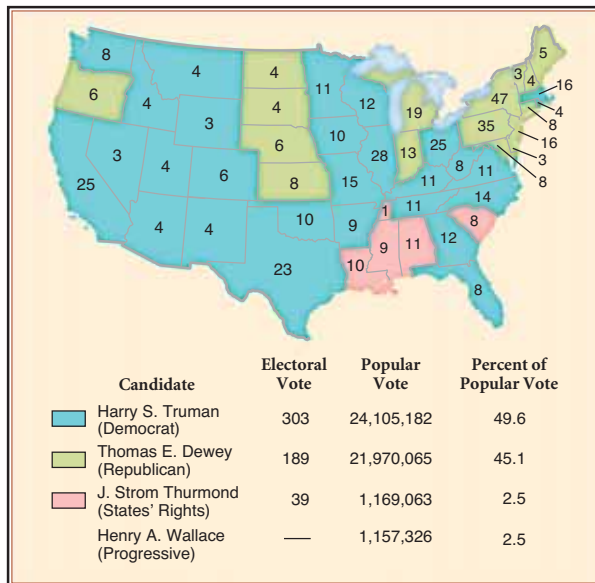
How was the Democratic Party divided in 1948, and what were its primary constituencies?

Truman Triumphant

In one of the most famous photographs in U.S. political history, Harry S. Truman gloats over an erroneous headline in the November 3 *Chicago Daily Tribune*. Pollsters had predicted an easy victory for Thomas E. Dewey. Their primitive techniques, however, missed the dramatic surge in support for Truman during the last days of the campaign.

© Bettmann/Corbis.





MAP 25.4

The Presidential Election of 1948

Truman's electoral strategy in 1948 was to concentrate his campaign in areas where the Democrats had their greatest strength. In an election with a low turnout, Truman held on to enough support from Roosevelt's New Deal coalition of blacks, union members, and farmers to defeat Dewey by more than 2 million votes.

This remarkable election foreshadowed coming political turmoil. Truman occupied the center of FDR's sprawling New Deal coalition. On his left were progressives, civil rights advocates, and anti-Cold War peace activists. On his right were segregationist southerners, who opposed civil rights and were allied with Republicans on many economic and foreign policy issues. In 1948, Truman performed a delicate balancing act, largely retaining the support of Jewish and Catholic voters in the big cities, black voters in the North, and organized labor voters across the country. But Thurmond's strong showing—he carried four states in the Deep South—demonstrated the fragile nature of the Democratic coalition and prefigured the revolt of the party's southern wing in the 1960s. As he tried to manage contending forces in his own party, Truman faced mounting pressure from Republicans to denounce radicals at home and to take a tough stand against the Soviet Union.

The Fair Deal Despite having to perform a balancing act, Truman and progressive Democrats forged ahead. In 1949, reaching ambitiously to extend the New Deal, Truman proposed the **Fair Deal**: national

health insurance, aid to education, a housing program, expansion of Social Security, a higher minimum wage, and a new agricultural program. In its attention to civil rights, the Fair Deal also reflected the growing role of African Americans in the Democratic Party. Congress, however, remained a huge stumbling block, and the Fair Deal fared poorly. The same conservative coalition that had blocked Roosevelt's initiatives in his second term continued the fight against Truman's. Cold War pressure shaped political arguments about domestic social programs, while the nation's growing paranoia over internal subversion weakened support for bold extensions of the welfare state. Truman's proposal for national health insurance, for instance, was a popular idea, with strong backing from organized labor. But it was denounced as "socialized medicine" by the American Medical Association and the insurance industry. In the end, the Fair Deal's only significant breakthrough, other than improvements to the minimum wage and Social Security, was the National Housing Act of 1949, which authorized the construction of 810,000 low-income units.

Red Scare: The Hunt for Communists

Cold War liberalism was premised on the grave domestic threat posed, many believed, by Communists and Communist sympathizers. Was there any significant Soviet penetration of the American government? Records opened after the 1991 disintegration of the Soviet Union indicate that there was, although it was largely confined to the 1930s. Among American suppliers of information to Moscow were FDR's assistant secretary of the treasury, Harry Dexter White; FDR's administrative aide Laughlin Currie; a strategically placed midlevel group in the State Department; and several hundred more, some identified only by code name, working in a range of government departments and agencies.

How are we to explain this? Many of these enlistees in the Soviet cause had been bright young New Dealers in the mid-1930s, when the Soviet-backed Popular Front suggested that the lines separating liberalism, progressivism, and communism were permeable (Chapter 24). At that time, the United States was not at war and never expected to be. And when war did come, the Soviet Union was an American ally. For critics of the informants, however, there remained the time between the Nazi-Soviet Pact and the German invasion of the Soviet Union, a nearly two-year period during which cooperation with the Soviet Union could be seen in a less positive light. Moreover,

passing secrets to another country, even a wartime ally, was simply indefensible to many Americans. The lines between U.S. and Soviet interests blurred for some; for others, they remained clear and definite.

After World War II, however, most suppliers of information to the Soviets apparently ceased spying. For one thing, the professional apparatus of Soviet spying in the United States was dismantled or disrupted by American counterintelligence work. For another, most of the well-connected amateur spies moved on to other careers. Historians have thus developed a healthy skepticism that there was much Soviet espionage in the United States after 1947, but this was not how many Americans saw it at the time. Legitimate suspicions and real fears, along with political opportunism, combined to fuel the national Red Scare, which was longer and more far-reaching than the one that followed World War I (Chapter 22).

Loyalty-Security Program To insulate his administration against charges of Communist infiltration, Truman issued Executive Order 9835 on March 21, 1947, which created the **Loyalty-Security Program**. The order permitted officials to investigate any employee of the federal government (some 2.5 million people) for “subversive” activities. Representing a profound centralization of power, the order sent shock waves through every federal agency. Truman intended the order to apply principally to actions designed to harm the United States (sabotage, treason, etc.), but it was broad enough to allow anyone to be accused of subversion for the slightest reason—for marching in a Communist-led demonstration in the 1930s, for instance, or signing a petition calling for public housing. Along with suspected political subversives, more than a thousand gay men and lesbians were dismissed from federal employment in the 1950s, victims of an obsessive search for anyone deemed “unfit” for government work.

Following Truman’s lead, many state and local governments, universities, political organizations, churches, and businesses undertook their own antsubversion campaigns, which often included loyalty oaths. In the labor movement, charges of Communist domination led to the expulsion of a number of unions by the Congress of Industrial Organizations (CIO) in 1949. Civil rights organizations such as the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) and the National Urban League also expelled Communists and “fellow travelers,” or Communist sympathizers. Thus the Red Scare spread from the federal government to the farthest reaches of American organizational, economic, and cultural life.

HUAC The Truman administration had legitimized the vague and malleable concept of “disloyalty.” Others proved willing to stretch the concept even further, beginning with the **House Un-American Activities Committee** (HUAC), which Congressman Martin Dies of Texas and other conservatives had launched in 1938. After the war, HUAC helped spark the Red Scare by holding widely publicized hearings in 1947 on alleged Communist infiltration in the movie industry. A group of writers and directors dubbed the Hollywood Ten went to jail for contempt of Congress after they refused to testify about their past associations. Hundreds of other actors, directors, and writers whose names had been mentioned in the HUAC investigation were unable to get work, victims of an unacknowledged but very real blacklist honored by industry executives.

Other HUAC investigations had greater legitimacy. One that intensified the anticommunist crusade in 1948 involved Alger Hiss, a former New Dealer and State Department official who had accompanied Franklin Roosevelt to Yalta. A former Communist, Whitaker Chambers, claimed that Hiss was a member of a secret Communist cell operating in the government and had passed him classified documents in the 1930s. Hiss denied the allegations, but California Republican congressman Richard Nixon doggedly pursued the case against him. In early 1950, Hiss was found guilty not of spying but of lying to Congress about his Communist affiliations and was sentenced to five years in federal prison. Many Americans doubted at the time that Hiss was a spy. But the Venona transcripts in the 1990s corroborated a great deal of Chambers’s testimony, and though no definitive proof has emerged, many historians now recognize the strong circumstantial evidence against Hiss.

McCarthyism The meteoric career of Senator Joseph McCarthy of Wisconsin marked first the apex and then the finale of the Red Scare. In February 1950, McCarthy delivered a bombshell during a speech in Wheeling, West Virginia: “I have here in my hand a list of 205 . . . 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.” McCarthy later reduced his numbers, gave different figures in different speeches, and never released any names or proof. But he had gained the attention he sought (*American Voices*, p. 822).

IDENTIFY CAUSES

What factors led to the postwar Red Scare, and what were its ramifications for civil liberties in the United States?

Hunting Communists and Liberals

Senator Joseph McCarthy Speech Delivered in Wheeling, West Virginia, February 9, 1950

Though Senator McCarthy was actually late getting on board the anticommunist rocket ship, this was the speech that launched him into orbit. No one else ever saw the piece of paper he waved about during this speech with the names of 57 spies in the State Department. Over time, the numbers he cited fluctuated (in early versions of this speech he claimed to have a list of 205 names) and never materialized into a single indictment for espionage. Still, McCarthy had an extraordinary talent for whipping up anticommunist hysteria. His downfall came in 1954, when the U.S. Senate formally censured him for his conduct; three years later, he died of alcoholism at the age of forty-eight.

Today we are engaged in a final, all-out battle between communistic atheism and Christianity. The modern champions of communism have selected this as the time. And, ladies and gentlemen, the chips are down — they are truly down. . . .

The reason why we find ourselves in a position of impotency is not because our only powerful potential enemy has sent men to invade our shores, but rather because of the traitorous actions of those who have been treated so well by this Nation. It has not been the less fortunate or members of minority groups who have been selling this Nation out, but rather those who have had all the benefits that the wealthiest nation on earth has had to offer — the finest homes, the finest college education, and the finest jobs in Government we can give. . . .

I have in my hand 57 cases of individuals who would appear to be either card carrying members or certainly loyal to the Communist Party, but who nevertheless are still helping to shape our foreign policy.

Fulton Lewis Jr. Radio Address, January 13, 1949

The groundwork for McCarthy's anticommunist crusade was laid by the House Un-American Activities Committee (HUAC), which had been formed in 1938 by conservative southern Democrats seeking to investigate alleged communist influence around the country. One of its early targets had been Dr. Frank P. Graham, the distinguished president of the University of North Carolina. A committed southern liberal, Graham was a leading figure in the Southern Conference on Human Welfare, the most prominent southern organization supporting the New Deal, free speech, organized labor, and greater rights for southern blacks—causes that some in the South saw as pathways for communist subversion. After the war, HUAC stepped up its activities and kept a close eye on Graham. Among Graham's duties was to serve as the head of the Oak Ridge Institute of Nuclear Studies, a consortium of fourteen southern universities designed to undertake joint research with the federal government's atomic energy facility at Oak Ridge, Tennessee. To enable him to carry on his duties, the Atomic Energy Commission (AEC) granted Graham a security clearance, overriding the negative recommendation of the AEC's Security Advisory Board. That was the occasion for the following statement by Fulton Lewis Jr., a conservative radio commentator with a nationwide following.

About Dr. Frank P. Graham, president of the University of North Carolina, and the action of the Atomic Energy Commission giving him complete clearance for all atomic secrets despite the fact that the security officer of the commission flatly rejected him. . . .

President Truman was asked to comment on the matter today at his press and radio conference, and his reply was that he has complete confidence in Dr. Graham.



. . . The defenders of Dr. Graham today offered the apology that during the time he joined the various subversive and Communist front organizations [like the Southern Conference for Human Welfare] — organizations so listed by the Attorney General of the United States — this country was a co-belligerent with Soviet Russia, and numerous people joined such groups and causes. That argument is going to sound very thin to most American citizens, because the overwhelming majority of us would have no part of any Communist or Communist front connections at any time.

Frank Porter Graham

Telegram to Fulton Lewis Jr., January 13, 1949

One can imagine Graham's shock at hearing himself pilloried on national radio. (He had not even been aware of the AEC's investigation of him.) The following is from his response to Lewis.

In view of your questions and implications I hope you will use my statement to provide for my answers. . . . I have always been opposed to Communism and all totalitarian dictatorships. I opposed both Nazi and Communist aggression against Czechoslovakia and the earlier Russian aggression against Finland and later Communist aggression against other countries. . . .

During the period of my active participation, the overwhelming number of members of the Southern Conference were to my knowledge anti-Communists. There were several isolationist stands of the Conference with which I disagreed. The stands which I supported as the main business of the Conference were such as the following: Federal aid to the states for schools; abolition of freight rate discrimination against Southern commerce, agriculture, and industry; anti-poll tax bill; anti-lynching bill; equal right of qualified Negroes to vote in both primaries and general elections; the unhampered lawful right of labor to organize and bargain collectively in our region; . . . minimum wages and social security in the Southern and American tradition. . . .

I have been called a Communist by some sincere people. I have been called a spokesman of American capitalism by Communists and repeatedly called a tool of imperialism by the radio from Moscow. I shall simply continue to oppose Ku Kluxism, imperialism, fascism, and Communism whether in America . . . or behind the "iron curtain."

House Un-American Activities Committee

Report on Frank Graham, February 4, 1949

Because of the controversy, HUAC released a report on Graham.

A check of the files, records and publications of the Committee on Un-American Activities has revealed the following information: Letterheads dated September 22, 1939, January 17, 1940, and May 26, 1940, as well as the "Daily Worker" of March 18, 1939, . . . reveal that Frank P. Graham was a member of the American Committee for Democracy and Intellectual Freedom. . . . In Report 2277, dated June 25, 1942, the Special Committee on Un-American Activities found that "the line of the American Committee for Democracy and Intellectual Freedom has fluctuated in complete harmony with the line of the Communist Party." The organization was again cited by the Special Committee . . . as a Communist front "which defended Communist teachers." . . .

A letterhead of February 7, 1946, a letterhead of June 4, 1947 . . . and an announcement of the Third Meeting, April 19–21, 1942, at Nashville, Tennessee, reveal that Frank P. Graham was honorary President of the Southern Conference for Human Welfare. . . .

In a report on the Southern Conference for Human Welfare, dated June 16, 1947, the Committee on Un-American Activities found "the most conclusive proof of Communist domination of the Southern Conference for Human Welfare is to be found in the organization's strict and unvarying conformance to the line of the Communist Party in the field of foreign policy. It is also a clear indication of the fact that the real purpose of the organization was not 'human welfare' in the South, but rather to serve as a convenient vehicle in support of the current Communist Party line."

Source: # 1819 Frank Porter Graham Papers. Courtesy of the Southern Historical Collection, Wilson Library, The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.

QUESTIONS FOR ANALYSIS

1. On what grounds did Fulton Lewis Jr. and HUAC assert that Frank Graham was a security risk? Did they charge that he was a Communist? Is there any evidence in these documents that Graham might have been a security risk?
2. How did Graham defend himself? Are you persuaded by his argument?
3. Compare McCarthy's famous speech at Wheeling, West Virginia, and the suspicions voiced against Graham by Lewis and HUAC a year earlier. What similarities do you see?

For the next four years, from his position as chair of the Senate Permanent Subcommittee on Investigations, McCarthy waged a virulent smear campaign. Critics who disagreed with him exposed themselves to charges of being “soft” on communism. Truman called McCarthy’s charges “slander, lies, [and] character assassination” but could do nothing to curb him. Republicans, for their part, refrained from publicly challenging their most outspoken senator and, on the whole, were content to reap the political benefits. McCarthy’s charges almost always targeted Democrats.

Despite McCarthy’s failure to identify a single Communist in government, several national developments gave his charges credibility with the public. The dramatic 1951 espionage trial of Julius and Ethel Rosenberg, followed around the world, fueled McCarthy’s allegations. Convicted of passing atomic secrets to the Soviet Union, the Rosenbergs were executed in 1953. As in

the Hiss case, documents released decades later provided some evidence of Julius Rosenberg’s guilt, though not Ethel’s. Their execution nevertheless remains controversial—in part because some felt that anti-Semitism played a role in their sentencing. Also fueling McCarthy’s charges were a series of trials of American Communists between 1949 and 1955 for violation of the 1940 Smith Act, which prohibited Americans from advocating the violent overthrow of the government. Though civil libertarians and two Supreme Court justices vigorously objected, dozens of Communist Party members were convicted. McCarthy was not involved in either the Rosenberg trial or the Smith Act convictions, but these sensational events gave his wild charges some credence.

In early 1954, McCarthy overreached by launching an investigation into subversive activities in the U.S. Army. When lengthy hearings—the first of their kind



The Army-McCarthy Hearings

These 1954 hearings contributed to the downfall of Senator Joseph McCarthy by exposing his reckless accusations and bullying tactics to the huge television audience that tuned in each day. Some of the most heated exchanges took place between McCarthy (center) and Joseph Welch (seated, left), the lawyer representing the army. When the gentlemanly Welch finally asked, “Have you no sense of decency sir, at long last? Have you left no sense of decency?” he fatally punctured McCarthy’s armor. The audience broke into applause because someone had finally had the courage to stand up to the senator from Wisconsin. © Bettmann/Corbis.

broadcast on the new medium of television — brought McCarthy's tactics into the nation's living rooms, support for him plummeted. In December 1954, the Senate voted 67 to 22 to censure McCarthy for unbecoming conduct. He died from an alcohol-related illness three years later at the age of forty-eight, his name forever attached to a period of political repression of which he was only the most flagrant manifestation.

The Politics of Cold War Liberalism

As election day 1952 approached, the nation was embroiled in the tense Cold War with the Soviet Union and fighting a “hot” war in Korea. Though Americans gave the Republicans victory, radical change was not in the offing. The new president, Dwight D. Eisenhower, set the tone for what his supporters called modern Republicanism, an updated GOP approach that aimed at moderating, not dismantling, the New Deal state. Eisenhower and his supporters were more successors of FDR than of Herbert Hoover. Foreign policy revealed a similar continuity. Like their predecessors, Republicans saw the world in Cold War polarities.

Republicans rallied around Eisenhower, the popular former commander of Allied forces in Europe, but divisions in the party persisted. More conservative party activists preferred Robert A. Taft of Ohio, the Republican leader in the Senate who was a vehement opponent of the New Deal. A close friend of business, he particularly detested labor unions. Though an ardent anticommunist, the isolationist-minded Taft criticized Truman's aggressive containment policy and opposed U.S. participation in NATO. Taft ran for president three times, and though he was never the Republican nominee, he won the loyalty of conservative Americans who saw the welfare state as a waste and international affairs as dangerous foreign entanglements.

In contrast, moderate Republicans looked to Eisenhower and even to more liberal-minded leaders like Nelson Rockefeller, who supported international initiatives such as the Marshall Plan and NATO and were willing to tolerate labor unions and the welfare state. Eisenhower was a man without a political past. Believing that democracy required the military to stand aside, he had never voted. Rockefeller, the scion of one of the richest families in America, was a Cold War internationalist. He served in a variety of capacities under Eisenhower, including as an advisor on foreign affairs. Having made his political name, Rockefeller was elected the governor of New York in 1959 and became the *de facto* leader of the liberal wing of the Republican Party.



Dwight Eisenhower

In this photo taken during the 1952 presidential campaign, Dwight D. Eisenhower acknowledges cheers from supporters in Chicago. “Ike,” as he was universally known, had been a popular five-star general in World War II (also serving as Supreme Allied Commander in the European theater) and turned to politics in the early 1950s as a member of the Republican Party. However, Eisenhower was a centrist who did little to disrupt the liberal social policies that Democrats had pursued since the 1930s.

© Bettmann/Corbis.

For eight years, between 1952 and 1960, Eisenhower steered a precarious course from the middle of the party, with conservative Taft Republicans on one side and liberal Rockefeller Republicans on the other. His

popularity temporarily kept the two sides at bay, though more ardent conservatives considered him a closet New Dealer. “Ike,” as he was widely known, proved willing to work with the mostly Democratic-controlled Congresses of those years. Eisenhower signed bills increasing federal outlays for veterans' benefits, housing, highway construction (Chapter 26), and Social Security, and he increased the minimum wage from 75 cents an hour to \$1. Like Truman, Eisenhower accepted some government responsibility for the economic security of individuals, part of a broad consensus in American politics in these years.

UNDERSTAND POINTS OF VIEW

What were the components of Cold War liberalism, and why did the Democratic Party embrace them?

America Under Eisenhower The global power realities that had called forth containment guided Eisenhower's foreign policy. New developments, however, altered the tone of the Cold War. Stalin's death in March 1953 precipitated an intraparty struggle in the Soviet Union that lasted until 1956, when Nikita Khrushchev emerged as Stalin's successor. Khrushchev soon startled communists around the world by denouncing Stalin and detailing his crimes and blunders. He also surprised many Americans by calling for "peaceful coexistence" with the West and by dealing more flexibly with dissent in the Communist world. But the new Soviet leader had his limits, and when Hungarians rose up in 1956 to demand independence from Moscow, Khrushchev crushed the incipient revolution.

With no end to the Cold War in sight, Eisenhower focused on limiting the cost of containment. The president hoped to economize by relying on a nuclear arsenal and deemphasizing expensive conventional forces. Under this "**New Look**" defense policy, the Eisenhower administration stepped up production of the hydrogen bomb and developed long-range bombing capabilities. The Soviets, however, matched the United States weapon for weapon. By 1958, both nations had intercontinental ballistic missiles. When an American nuclear submarine launched an atomic-tipped Polaris missile in 1960, Soviet engineers raced to produce an equivalent weapon. This arms race was another critical feature of the Cold War. American officials believed the best deterrent to Soviet aggression was the threat of an all-out nuclear response by the United States, which was dubbed "massive retaliation" by Secretary of State Dulles.



To see a longer excerpt of the Dulles document, along with other primary sources from this period, see *Sources for America's History*.

Although confident in the international arena, Eisenhower started out as a novice in domestic affairs. Doing his best to set a less confrontational tone after the rancorous Truman years, he was reluctant to speak out against Joe McCarthy, and he was not a leader on civil rights. Democrats meanwhile maintained a strong presence in Congress but proved weak in presidential elections in the 1950s. In the two presidential contests of the decade, 1952 and 1956, Eisenhower defeated the admired but politically ineffectual liberal Adlai Stevenson. In the 1952 election, Stevenson was hampered by the unpopularity of the Truman administration. The deadlocked Korean War and a series of scandals that Republicans dubbed "the mess in

Washington" combined to give the war-hero general an easy victory. In 1956, Ike won an even more impressive victory over Stevenson, an eloquent and sophisticated spokesman for liberalism but no match for Eisenhower's popularity with the public.

During Eisenhower's presidency, new political forces on both the right and the left had begun to stir. But they had not yet fully transformed the party system itself. Particularly at the national level, Democrats and Republicans seemed in broad agreement about the realities of the Cold War and the demands of a modern, industrial economy and welfare state. Indeed, respected commentators in the 1950s declared "the end of ideology" and wondered if the great political clashes that had wracked the 1930s were gone forever. Below the apparent calm of national party politics, however, lay profound differences among Americans over the direction of the nation. Those differences were most pronounced regarding the civil rights of African Americans. But a host of other issues had begun to emerge as controversial subjects that would soon starkly divide the country and, in the 1960s, bring an end to the brief and fragile Cold War consensus.

Containment in the Postcolonial World

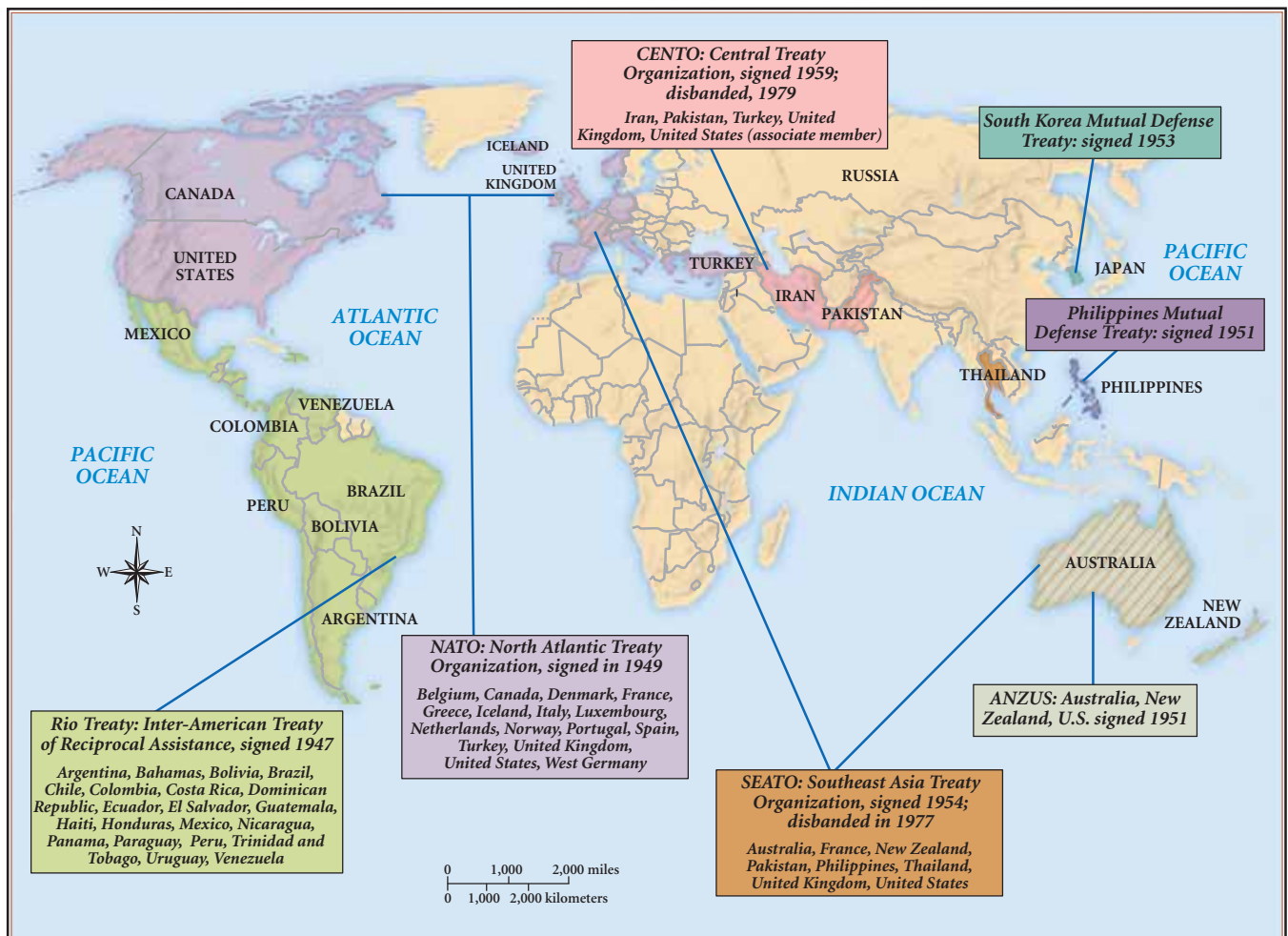
As the Cold War took shape, the world scene was changing at a furious pace. New nations were emerging across Asia, Africa, and the Middle East, created in the wake of powerful anticolonial movements whose origins dated to before World War II. Between 1947 and 1962, the British, French, Dutch, and Belgian empires all but disintegrated in a momentous collapse of European global reach. FDR had favored the idea of national self-determination, often to the fury of his British and French allies. He expected emerging democracies to be new partners in an American-led, free-market world system. But colonial revolts produced many independent- or socialist-minded regimes in the so-called Third World, as well. *Third World* was a term that came into usage after World War II to describe developing or ex-colonial nations in Asia, Africa, Latin America, and the Middle East that were not aligned with the Western capitalist countries led by the United States or the socialist states of Eastern Europe led by the Soviet Union. The Truman and Eisenhower administrations often treated Third World countries as pawns of the Soviet Union to be opposed at all costs.

The Cold War and Colonial Independence

Insisting that all nations had to choose sides, the United States drew as many countries as possible into collective security agreements, with the NATO alliance in Europe as a model. Secretary of State John Foster Dulles orchestrated the creation of the Southeast Asia Treaty Organization (SEATO), which in 1954 linked the United States and its major European allies with Australia, New Zealand, Pakistan, the Philippines, and Thailand. An extensive system of defense alliances eventually tied the United States to more than forty

other countries (Map 25.5). The United States also sponsored a strategically valuable defensive alliance between Iraq and Iran, on the southern flank of the Soviet Union.

Despite American rhetoric, the United States was often concerned less about democracy than about stability. The Truman and Eisenhower administrations tended to support governments, no matter how repressive, that were overtly anticommunist. Some of America's staunchest allies—the Philippines, South Korea, Iran, Cuba, South Vietnam, and Nicaragua—were governed by dictatorships or right-wing regimes that lacked broad-based support. Moreover, Eisenhower's



MAP 25.5

American Global Defense Treaties in the Cold War Era

The advent of the Cold War led to a major shift in American foreign policy—the signing of mutual defense treaties. Dating back to George Washington's call "to steer clear of permanent alliances with any portion of the foreign world," the United States had avoided treaty obligations that entailed the defense of other nations. As late as 1919, the U.S. Senate had rejected the principle of "collective security," the centerpiece of the League of Nations established by the Treaty of Versailles that ended World War I. But after World War II, in response to fears of Soviet global expansion, the United States entered defense alliances with much of the non-Communist world.

secretary of state Dulles often resorted to covert operations against governments that, in his opinion, were too closely aligned with the Soviets.

For these covert tasks, Dulles used the newly created (1947) Central Intelligence Agency (CIA), run by his brother, Allen Dulles. When Iran's democratically elected nationalist premier, Mohammad Mossadegh, seized British oil properties in 1953, CIA agents helped depose him and installed the young Mohammad Reza Pahlavi as shah of Iran. Iranian resentment of the coup, followed by twenty-five years of U.S. support for the shah, eventually led to the 1979 Iranian Revolution (Chapter 30). In 1954, the CIA also engineered a coup in Guatemala against the democratically elected president, Jacobo Arbenz Guzmán, who had seized land owned by the American-owned United Fruit Company. Arbenz offered to pay United Fruit the declared value of the land, but the company rejected the offer and turned to the U.S. government. Eisenhower specifically approved those CIA efforts and expanded the agency's mandate from gathering intelligence to intervening in the affairs of sovereign states.

Vietnam But when covert operations and coups failed or proved impractical, the American approach to emerging nations could entangle the United States in deeper, more intractable conflicts. One example was already unfolding on a distant stage, in a small country unknown to most Americans: Vietnam. In August 1945, at the close of World War II, the Japanese occupiers of Vietnam surrendered to China in the north and Britain in the south. The Vietminh, the nationalist movement that had led the resistance against the Japanese (and the French, prior to 1940), seized control in the north. But their leader, Ho Chi Minh, was a Communist, and this single fact outweighed American and British commitment to self-determination. When France moved to restore its control over the country, the United States and Britain sided with their European ally. President Truman rejected Ho's plea to support the Vietnamese struggle for nationhood, and France rejected Ho's offer of a negotiated independence. Shortly after France returned, in late 1946, the Vietminh resumed their war of national liberation.

Eisenhower picked up where Truman left off. If the French failed, Eisenhower argued, all non-Communist governments in the region would fall like dominoes. This so-called **domino theory**—which represented an extension of the containment

doctrine—guided U.S. policy in Southeast Asia for the next twenty years. The United States eventually provided most of the financing for the French war, but money was not enough to defeat the determined Vietminh, who were fighting for the liberation of their country. After a fifty-six-day siege in early 1954, the French were defeated at the huge fortress of Dien Bien Phu. The result was the 1954 Geneva Accords, which partitioned Vietnam temporarily at the 17th parallel and called for elections within two years to unify the strife-torn nation.

The United States rejected the Geneva Accords and set about undermining them. With the help of the CIA, a pro-American government took power in South Vietnam in June 1954. Ngo Dinh Diem, an anticommunist Catholic who had been residing in the United States, returned to Vietnam as premier. The next year, in a rigged election, Diem became president of an independent South Vietnam. Facing certain defeat by the popular Ho Chi Minh, Diem called off the scheduled reunification elections. As the last French soldiers left in March 1956, the Eisenhower administration propped up Diem with an average of \$200 million a year in aid and a contingent of 675 American military advisors. This support was just the beginning.

The Middle East If Vietnam was still of minor concern, the same could not be said of the Middle East, an area rich in oil and political complexity. The most volatile area was Palestine, populated by Arabs but also historically the ancient land of Israel and coveted by the Zionist movement as a Jewish national homeland. After World War II, many survivors of the Nazi extermination camps resettled in Palestine, which was still controlled by Britain under a World War I mandate. On November 29, 1947, the UN General Assembly voted to partition Palestine between Jewish and Arab sectors. When the British mandate ended in 1948, Zionist leaders proclaimed the state of Israel. A coalition of Arab nations known as the Arab League invaded, but Israel survived. Many Palestinians fled or were driven from their homes during the fighting. The Arab defeat left these people permanently stranded in refugee camps. President Truman recognized the new state immediately, which won him crucial support from Jewish voters in the 1948 election but alienated the Arab world.

Southeast of Palestine, Egypt began to assert its presence in the region. Having gained independence from Britain several decades earlier, Egypt remained a monarchy until 1952, when Gamal Abdel Nasser led a military coup that established a constitutional republic.

IDENTIFY CAUSES

How did the Cold War between the United States and the Soviet Union affect disparate regions such as the Middle East and Southeast Asia?

The Suez Crisis, 1956

In this photograph, Egyptian president Gamal Abdel Nasser is greeted ecstatically by Cairo crowds after he nationalized the Suez Canal. Nasser's gamble paid off. Thanks to American intervention, military action by Britain, France, and Israel failed, and Nasser emerged as the triumphant voice of Arab nationalism across the Middle East. The popular emotions he unleashed against the West survived his death in 1970 and are more potent today than ever, although now expressed more through Islamic fundamentalism than Nasser's brand of secular nationalism. Getty Images.



Caught between the Soviet Union and the United States, Nasser sought an independent route: a pan-Arab socialism designed to end the Middle East's colonial relationship with the West. When negotiations with the United States over Nasser's plan to build a massive hydroelectric dam on the Nile broke down in 1956, he nationalized the Suez Canal, which was the lifeline for Western Europe's oil. Britain and France, in alliance with Israel, attacked Egypt and seized the canal. Concerned that the invasion would encourage Egypt to turn to the Soviets for help, Eisenhower urged France and Britain to pull back. He applied additional pressure through the UN General Assembly, which called for a truce and troop withdrawal. When the Western nations backed down, however, Egypt reclaimed the Suez Canal and built the Aswan Dam on the Nile with Soviet support. Eisenhower had likely avoided a larger war, but the West lost a potential ally in Nasser.

In early 1957, concerned about Soviet influence in the Middle East, the president announced the **Eisenhower Doctrine**, which stated that American forces would assist any nation in the region that required aid "against overt armed aggression from any nation controlled by International Communism." Invoking the doctrine later that year, Eisenhower helped King Hussein of Jordan put down a Nasser-backed revolt and propped up a pro-American government in

Lebanon. The Eisenhower Doctrine was further evidence that the United States had extended the global reach of containment, in this instance accentuated by the strategic need to protect the West's access to steady supplies of oil.

John F. Kennedy and the Cold War

Charisma, style, and personality—these, more than platforms and issues, defined a new brand of politics in the early 1960s. This was John F. Kennedy's natural environment. Kennedy, a Harvard alumnus, World War II hero, and senator from Massachusetts, had inherited his love of politics from his grandfathers—colorful, and often ruthless, Irish Catholic politicians in Boston. Ambitious and deeply aware of style, the forty-three-year-old Kennedy made use of his many advantages to become, as novelist Norman Mailer put it, "our leading man." His one disadvantage—that he was Catholic in a country that had never elected a Catholic president—he masterfully neutralized. And thanks to both media advisors and his youthful attractiveness, Kennedy projected a superb television image.

At heart, however, Kennedy was a Cold Warrior who had

COMPARE AND CONTRAST

How was Kennedy's approach to the Cold War similar to and different from Eisenhower's and Truman's?



The Kennedy Magnetism

John F. Kennedy, the 1960 Democratic candidate for president, used his youth and personality (and those of his equally personable and stylish wife) to attract voters. Here the Massachusetts senator draws an enthusiastic crowd on a campaign stop in Elgin, Illinois. AP Images.

come of age in the shadow of Munich, Yalta, and McCarthyism. He projected an air of idealism, but his years in the Senate (1953–1960) had proved him to be a conventional Cold War politician. Once elected president, Kennedy would shape the nation's foreign policy by drawing both on his ingenuity and on old-style Cold War power politics.

The Election of 1960 and the New Frontier

Kennedy's Republican opponent in the 1960 presidential election, Eisenhower's vice president, Richard Nixon, was a seasoned politician and Cold Warrior himself. The great innovation of the 1960 campaign was a series of four nationally televised debates. Nixon, less photogenic than Kennedy, looked sallow and unshaven under the intense studio lights. Voters who heard the first debate on the radio concluded that Nixon had won, but those who viewed it on television favored Kennedy. Despite the edge Kennedy enjoyed in the debates, he won only the narrowest of electoral victories, receiving 49.7 percent of the popular vote to Nixon's 49.5 percent. Kennedy attracted Catholics, African Americans, and the labor vote; his vice-presidential running mate, Texas senator Lyndon Baines Johnson, helped bring in southern Democrats. Yet only 120,000 votes separated the two candidates, and a shift of a few thousand votes in key states would have reversed the outcome.

Kennedy brought to Washington a cadre of young, ambitious newcomers, including Robert McNamara, a

renowned systems analyst and former head of Ford Motor Company, as secretary of defense. A host of trusted advisors and academics flocked to Washington to join the New Frontier—Kennedy's term for the challenges the country faced. Included on the team as attorney general was Kennedy's younger brother Robert, who had made a name as a hard-hitting investigator of organized crime. Relying on an old American trope, Kennedy's New Frontier suggested masculine toughness and adventurism and encouraged Americans to again think of themselves as exploring uncharted terrain. That terrain proved treacherous, however, as the new administration immediately faced a crisis.

Crises in Cuba and Berlin In January 1961, the Soviet Union announced that it intended to support "wars of national liberation" wherever in the world they occurred. Kennedy took Soviet premier Nikita Khrushchev's words as a challenge, especially as they applied to Cuba, where in 1959 Fidel Castro had overthrown the right-wing dictator Fulgencio Batista and declared a revolution. Determined to keep Cuba out of the Soviet orbit, Kennedy followed through on Eisenhower administration plans to dispatch Cuban exiles to foment an anti-Castro uprising. The invaders, trained by the Central Intelligence Agency, were ill-prepared for their task. On landing at Cuba's **Bay of Pigs** on April 17, 1961, the force of 1,400 was crushed by Castro's troops. Kennedy prudently rejected CIA pleas for a U.S. air strike. Accepting defeat, Kennedy

went before the American people and took full responsibility for the fiasco (Map 25.6).

Already strained by the Bay of Pigs incident, U.S.-Soviet relations deteriorated further in June 1961 when Khrushchev stopped movement between Communist-controlled East Berlin and the city's Western sector. Kennedy responded by dispatching 40,000 more troops to Europe. In mid-August, to stop the exodus of East Germans, the Communist regime began constructing the Berlin Wall, policed by border guards under shoot-to-kill orders. Until the 12-foot-high concrete barrier came down in 1989, it served as the supreme symbol of the Cold War.

A perilous Cold War confrontation came next, in October 1962. In a somber televised address on October 22, Kennedy revealed that U.S. reconnaissance

planes had spotted Soviet-built bases for intermediate-range ballistic missiles in Cuba. Some of those weapons had already been installed, and more were on the way. Kennedy announced that the United States would impose a “quarantine on all offensive military equipment” on its way to Cuba. As the world held its breath waiting to see if the conflict would escalate into war, on October 25, ships carrying Soviet missiles turned back. After a week of tense negotiations, both sides made concessions: Kennedy pledged not to invade Cuba, and Khrushchev promised to dismantle the missile bases. Kennedy also secretly ordered U.S. missiles to be removed from Turkey, at Khrushchev's insistence. The risk of nuclear war, greater during the **Cuban missile crisis** than at any other time in the Cold War, prompted a slight thaw in U.S.-Soviet relations. As National



MAP 25.6

The United States and Cuba, 1961–1962

Fidel Castro's 1959 Communist takeover of Cuba brought Cold War tensions to the Caribbean. In 1961, the United States tried unsuccessfully to overthrow Castro's regime by sponsoring the Bay of Pigs invasion of Cuban exiles launched from Nicaragua and other points in the Caribbean. In 1962, the United States confronted the Soviet Union over Soviet construction of nuclear missile sites in Cuba. After President Kennedy ordered a naval blockade of the island, the Soviets backed down from the tense standoff and removed the missiles. Despite the 1991 dissolution of the Soviet Union and the official end of the Cold War, the United States continues to view Cuba, governed in 2012 by Raúl Castro, Fidel's brother, as an enemy nation.



The Berlin Wall

A West Berlin resident walks alongside a section of the Berlin Wall in August 1962, a year after its construction. Note the two border guards on the East Berlin side, plus the numerous loudspeakers, which East German Communists used to broadcast propaganda over the barricade that divided the city. © Bettmann/Corbis.

Security Advisor McGeorge Bundy put it, both sides were chastened by “having come so close to the edge.”

Kennedy and the World Kennedy also launched a series of bold nonmilitary initiatives. One was the **Peace Corps**, which embodied a call to public service put forth in his inaugural address (“Ask not what your country can do for you, but what you can do for your country”). Thousands of men and women agreed to devote two or more years as volunteers for projects such as teaching English to Filipino schoolchildren or helping African villagers obtain clean water. Exhibiting the idealism of the early 1960s, the Peace Corps was also a low-cost Cold War weapon intended to show the developing world that there was an alternative to communism. Kennedy championed space exploration, as well. In a 1962 speech, he proposed that the nation commit itself to landing a man on the moon within the decade. The Soviets had already beaten the United

States into space with the 1957 *Sputnik* satellite and the 1961 flight of cosmonaut Yuri Gagarin. Capitalizing on America’s fascination with space, Kennedy persuaded Congress to increase funding for the government’s space agency, the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA), enabling the United States to pull ahead of the Soviet Union. Kennedy’s ambition was realized when U.S. astronauts arrived on the moon in 1969.

Making a Commitment in Vietnam

Despite slight improvements, U.S.-Soviet relations stayed tense and containment remained the cornerstone of U.S. policy. When Kennedy became president, he inherited Eisenhower’s commitment in Vietnam. Kennedy saw Vietnam in Cold War terms, but rather than practicing brinkmanship—threatening nuclear war to stop communism—Kennedy sought what at



The Cuban Missile Crisis

During the 1962 Cuban missile crisis, President Kennedy meets with U.S. Army officials. Over two tense weeks, the world watched as the United States and the Soviet Union went to the brink of war when it became known that Soviet military officials had begun to construct nuclear weapons bases in Cuba, a mere 90 miles from the southern tip of Florida. Kennedy's threat to intercept Soviet missile shipments with American naval vessels forced the Cold War adversary to back down. © Corbis.

the time seemed a more intelligent and realistic approach. In 1961, he increased military aid to the South Vietnamese and expanded the role of U.S. Special Forces ("Green Berets"), who would train the South Vietnamese army in unconventional, small-group warfare tactics.

South Vietnam's corrupt and repressive Diem regime, propped up by Eisenhower since 1954, was losing ground in spite of American aid. By 1961, Diem's opponents, with backing from North Vietnam, had formed a revolutionary movement known as the National Liberation Front (NLF). NLF guerrilla forces—the Vietcong—found allies among peasants alienated by Diem's "strategic hamlet" program, which had uprooted entire villages and moved villagers into barbed-wire compounds. Furthermore, Buddhists charged Diem, a Catholic, with religious persecution. Starting in May 1963, militant Buddhists staged dramatic demonstrations, including self-immolations recorded by reporters covering the activities of the 16,000 U.S. military personnel then in Vietnam.

These self-immolations, shown on television to an uneasy global audience, powerfully illustrated the dilemmas of American policy in Vietnam. To ensure a stable

southern government and prevent victory for Ho Chi Minh and the North, the United States had to support Diem's authoritarian regime. But the regime's political repression of its opponents made Diem more unpopular. He was assassinated on November 3, 1963. Whether one supported U.S. involvement in Vietnam or not, the elemental paradox remained unchanged: in its efforts to win, the United States brought defeat ever closer.

SUMMARY

The Cold War began as a conflict between the United States and the Soviet Union over Eastern Europe and the fate of post-World War II Germany. Early in the conflict, the United States adopted a strategy of containment, which quickly expanded to Asia after China became a communist state under Mao Zedong. The first effect of that expansion was the Korean War, after which, under Dwight D. Eisenhower, containment of communism became America's guiding principle across the developing world—often called the Third World. Cold War tensions relaxed in the late 1950s but erupted again under John F. Kennedy with the Cuban

missile crisis, the building of the Berlin Wall, and major increases in American military assistance to South Vietnam. Cold War imperatives between 1945 and the early 1960s meant a major military buildup, a massive nuclear arms race, and unprecedented entanglements across the globe.

On the domestic front, Harry S. Truman started out with high hopes for an expanded New Deal, only to be confounded by resistance from Congress and the competing demands of the Cold War. The greatest

Cold War–inspired development was a climate of fear over internal subversion by Communists that gave rise to McCarthyism. Truman’s successor, Eisenhower, brought the Republicans back into power. Although personally conservative, Eisenhower actually proved a New Dealer in disguise. When Eisenhower left office and Kennedy became president, it seemed that a “liberal consensus” prevailed, with old-fashioned, *laissez-faire* conservatism mostly marginalized in American political life.

CHAPTER REVIEW



MAKE IT STICK Go to **LearningCurve** to retain what you’ve read.

TERMS TO KNOW Identify and explain the significance of each term below.

Key Concepts and Events

Yalta Conference (p. 806)

United Nations (p. 807)

Potsdam Conference (p. 807)

containment (p. 808)

Truman Doctrine (p. 809)

Marshall Plan (p. 809)

North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) (p. 812)

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Key People

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John F. Kennedy (p. 829)

Fidel Castro (p. 830)

Ho Chi Minh (p. 833)

REVIEW QUESTIONS Answer these questions to demonstrate your understanding of the chapter’s main ideas.

1. What factors led to the Cold War?
2. What was the domestic impact of the anticommunist crusade of the late 1940s and 1950s?
3. Why did the United States become involved in Vietnam?

4. THEMATIC UNDERSTANDING Review the events listed under “Politics and Power” and “Identity” on the thematic timelines on pages 671 and 803. Radicalism played a significant role in American history between 1890 and 1945. What radical politics took root in the United States during this time, and how did the government, the business community, and different social groups respond to that radicalism?

MAKING CONNECTIONS

Recognize the larger developments and continuities within and across chapters by answering these questions.

- 1. ACROSS TIME AND PLACE** How was America's Cold War foreign policy an extension of principles and policies from earlier eras, and in what ways was it a break with those traditions? Was the Cold War inevitable? Why or why not?
- 2. VISUAL EVIDENCE** Look at the map of the military-industrial complex (Map 25.3) on page 817

and the map of population changes (Chapter 26, Map 26.2) on page 862. Where were the majority of military weapons manufactured? What were the connections between weapons and geography? How did those connections affect population distribution in the United States and within individual metropolitan areas?

MORE TO EXPLORE

Start here to learn more about the events discussed in this chapter.

John Lewis Gaddis, *The Cold War: A New History* (2005), and Walter LaFeber, *America, Russia, and the Cold War, 1945–2006*, 10th ed. (2008). Excellent overviews of the Cold War from distinct perspectives.

John Earl Haynes and Harvey Klehr, *Venona: Decoding Soviet Espionage in America* (1999). A thoughtful analysis of Soviet espionage.

W. J. Rorabaugh, *Kennedy and the Promise of the Sixties* (2002). A good starting point for Kennedy's presidency.

Ellen Schrecker, *Many Are the Crimes: McCarthyism in America* (1998). An excellent, detailed account of the McCarthy period.

The Center for the Study of the Pacific Northwest's site, "The Cold War and Red Scare in Washington State," at [washington.edu/uwired/outreach/cspn/Website/Classroom Materials/Curriculum Packets/Cold War & Red Scare/Cold War and Red Scare.html](http://www.washington.edu/uwired/outreach/cspn/Website/Classroom%20Materials/Curriculum%20Packets/Cold%20War%20&%20Red%20Scare/Cold%20War%20and%20Red%20Scare.html), provides detailed information on how the Red Scare operated in one state.

The Woodrow Wilson International Center has established the Cold War International History Project at wilsoncenter.org/cwihp.

TIMELINE Ask yourself why this chapter begins and ends with these dates and then identify the links among related events.

1945	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • End of World War II; Yalta and Potsdam conferences • Senate approves U.S. participation in United Nations
1946	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • George F. Kennan outlines containment policy • U.S. sides with French in war between French and Vietminh over control of Vietnam
1947	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Truman Doctrine • House Un-American Activities Committee (HUAC) investigates film industry
1948	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communist coup in Czechoslovakia • Marshall Plan aids economic recovery in Europe • State of Israel created • Stalin blockades West Berlin; Berlin Airlift begins
1949	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) founded • Soviet Union detonates atomic bomb • Mao Zedong establishes People's Republic of China
1950–1953	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Korean War
1950	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NSC-68 leads to nuclear buildup • Joseph McCarthy announces "list" of Communists in government
1952	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dwight D. Eisenhower elected president
1954	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Army-McCarthy hearings on army subversion • Geneva Accords partition Vietnam
1956	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nikita Khrushchev emerges as Stalin's successor • Suez Canal crisis
1960	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • John F. Kennedy elected president
1961	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Kennedy orders the first contingent of Special Forces ("Green Berets") to Vietnam
1963	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Diem assassinated in South Vietnam

KEY TURNING POINTS: What turning points and crises defined American containment policy between 1946 and 1953? Explain your answer with evidence from the timeline and chapter.