

The Cold War Era

Unit 28 (1945-1991)

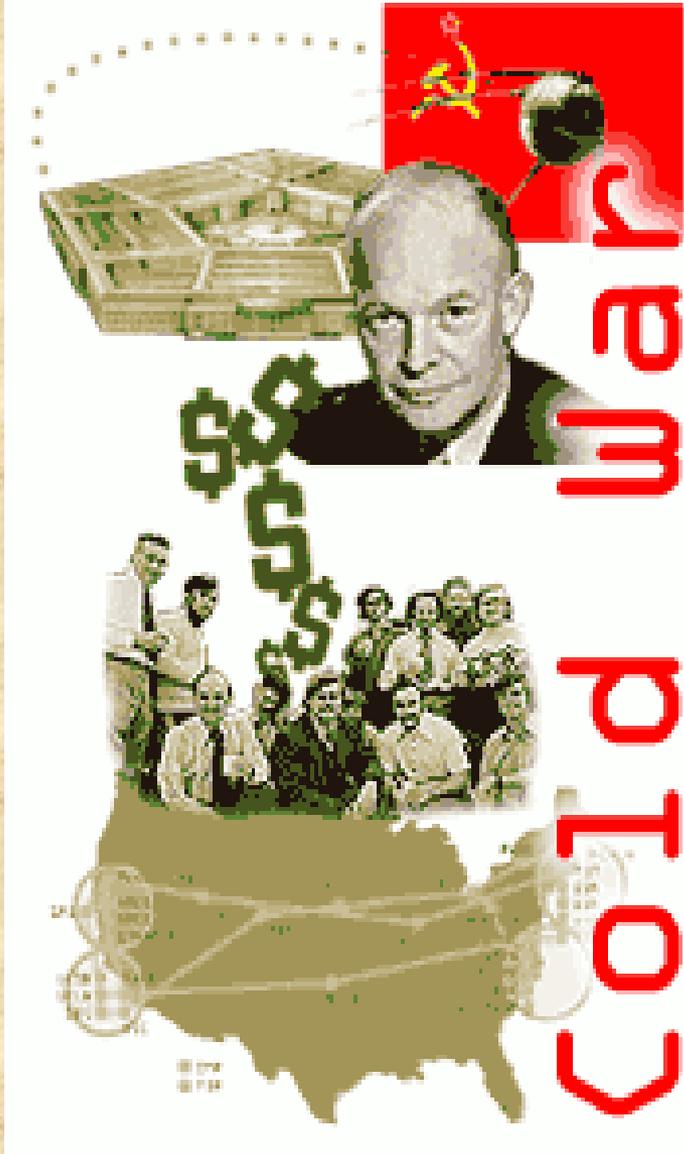
American Nation

Textbook Pages

809-839



1. The Cold War Begins



After World War II, the United States and the Soviet Union became rivals. They competed for influence around the world but did not face each other directly in battle. This conflict became known as the Cold War. The United States distrusted the communist government of the Soviet Union, which rejected religion and the idea of private property. The Soviet Union also distrusted the United States, fearing the invasion from the West.

Where is the Soviet Union?

The Soviet Union was in Asia & Europe



Where is the United States?

N Former Soviet Union





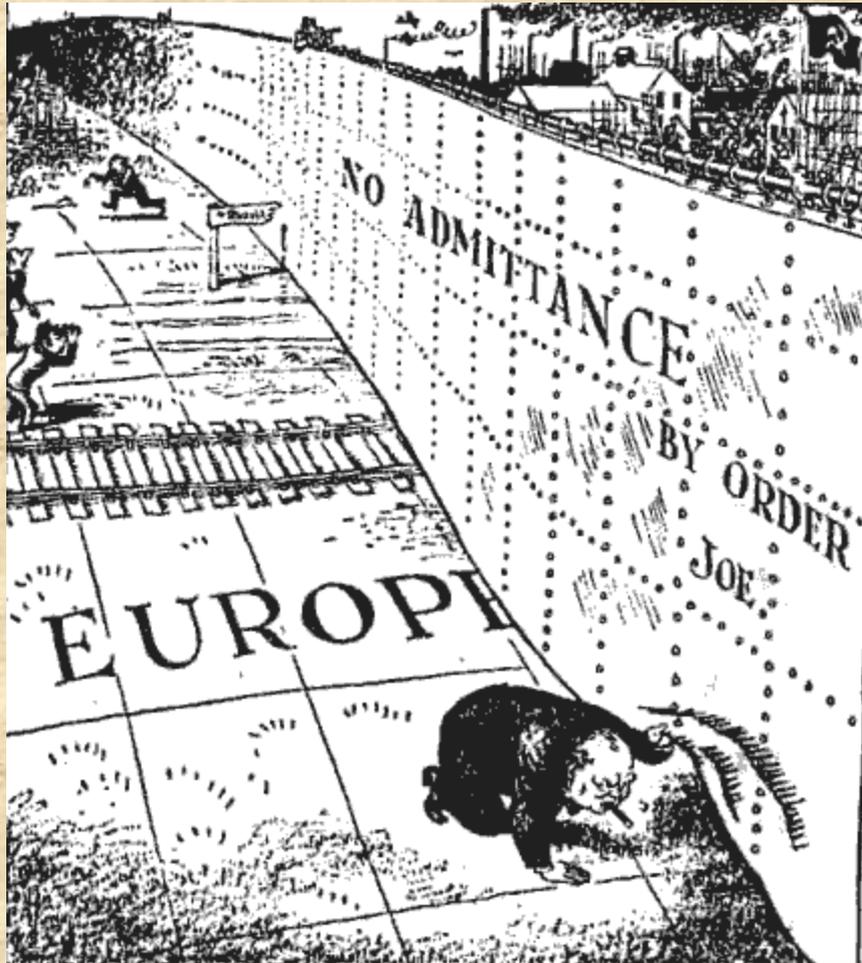
AS YOU
READ

The Red Army marches

Draw Inferences Why might the Soviet Union want to expand its power into Eastern Europe?

The distrust between the two sides increased when the Soviet Union did not allow fair elections in the countries it had freed from Germany. By 1948, the countries of Eastern Europe had become satellite nations of the Soviet Union. A satellite nation is a country dominated by a more powerful country.





Iron curtain

President Truman decided on a policy of containment. Containment is the American policy designed to prevent Soviet influence from expanding. “From Stettin in the Baltic to Trieste in the Adriatic, an iron curtain has descended across the Continent.” What do you think the iron curtain was?

An American Profile



Harry S Truman

1884–1972

When the United States entered World War I, Harry Truman was 32 and barely able to see without glasses. He could easily have escaped the draft. But, Harry wanted to serve his country. So, he memorized the eye chart and was accepted.

Truman was sent to France as an artillery captain. During a night skirmish, he was on horseback when his unit came under fire from German positions. Abandoning their weapons, the soldiers began to run. In the panic, Truman was thrown from his horse. He remounted and, with shells exploding all around, shamed his men into returning to their guns. For the rest of the war, the unit fought bravely and well.

What leadership qualities did Truman show in combat?

Under the Truman Doctrine, the United States helped nations threatened by communist expansion. Harry Truman was determined to keep Soviet influence contained between boundaries. This Cold War policy became known as containment. Under the Marshall Plan, the United States helped the countries of Western Europe rebuild from war damage. American aid helped prevent communist revolutions in those countries.



Viewing History

Devastated Europe



Like this German city, much of Europe lay in ruins after World War II. Homes, factories, roads, and farms had been destroyed. **Identifying Alternatives** *What sort of aid do you think was most helpful to the people of Europe?*



Americans and Soviets clashed over the city of Berlin. Americans would not let the city of Berlin fall into Soviet hands so the Americans began the [Berlin Airlift](#) in which hundreds of American and British planes carried tons of food and supplies to the people of West Berlin. The [Berlin Wall](#) became a symbol of the Cold War.



[Berlin Airlift](#)



[Berlin Wall](#)

In 1949, Cold War Tensions increased when the Soviet Union tested an atomic bomb and Communists gained power in China under the control of Mao Zedong. Mao's Civil war forces set up Ta country called the People's Republic of China.



atomic bomb



Emblem from the People's Republic of China. The countryside of China.



Cold War in Europe

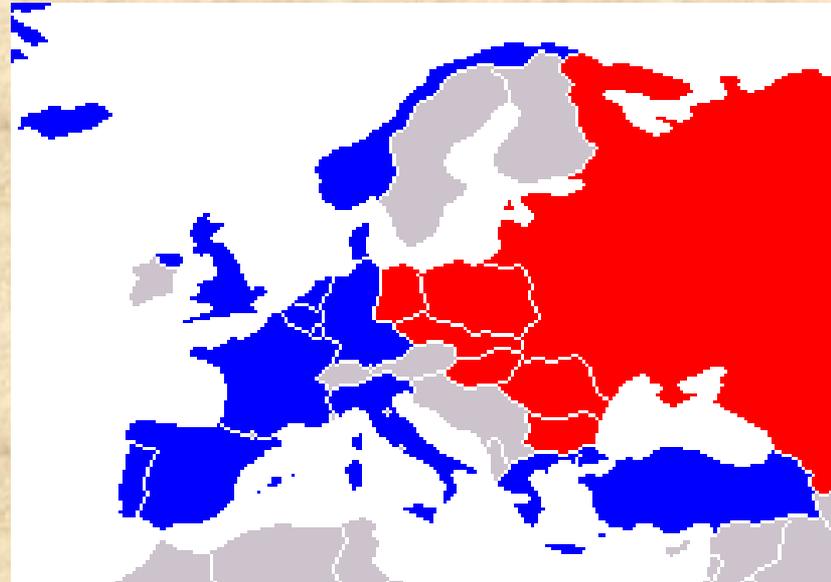


GEOGRAPHY Skills

By 1955, the United States and 14 other nations belonged to NATO. That same year, the Soviet Union and seven Eastern European nations formed the Warsaw Pact.

- Location** On the map, locate (a) the Soviet Union, (b) Poland, (c) East Germany, (d) West Germany, (e) Yugoslavia.
- Region** Which NATO nations bordered Warsaw Pact nations?
- Critical Thinking**
Drawing Conclusions
Why do you think most of the nations of Western Europe joined NATO?

The United States joined with the Western European nations to form the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO.) The Soviet Union formed its own alliances, called the Warsaw Pact.



Blue= NATO

Red= Warsaw Pact

Many disputes were brought to a new world organization called the United Nations. The United Nations tried to settle disputes between nations without war.



The United Nations building in New York City

2. The Korean War Period

After World War II, the Korean peninsula in northeast Asia was divided into two zones: communist North Korea and noncommunist South Korea. The two countries were divided at the 38th parallel. North Korea invaded South Korea in 1950. The United Nations, an international peace keeping organization started after World War II, sent armed forces to stop the invasion. Americans led and made up most of these forces.



38th parallel

In 1950 North Korea swept across the 38th parallel into South Korea. The South Korean forces were quickly overwhelmed. President Truman sent American troops led by Douglas MacArthur. President Truman had to get approval from the United Nations first. American forces under General Douglas MacArthur successfully drove North Korean forces back. This action angered China, North Korea's ally. President Truman wanted to avoid another world war. He called for peace agreements.

An American Profile



Douglas MacArthur

1880–1964

Douglas MacArthur was raised on army posts and attended the U.S. Military Academy at West Point. There, he achieved one of the highest records in Academy history. During World War I, he fought in France, winning numerous decorations for bravery and leadership.

In World War II, MacArthur commanded Allied forces fighting Japan in the Southwest Pacific. After the war, he led the Allied occupation of Japan. Under MacArthur, the power of the Japanese military was broken, land was distributed to poor farmers, and new rights were given to Japanese women.

What do you think was MacArthur's greatest accomplishment?

The Korean War



Taking a brief break from battle



GEOGRAPHY Skills

When North Korean forces drove deep into South Korea, a United Nations force came to the aid of the South.

- 1. Location** On the map, locate (a) North Korea, (b) South Korea, (c) 38th parallel, (d) Inchon, (e) Seoul, (f) Yalu River.
- 2. Movement** Which side controlled Seoul (a) in September 1950, (b) in November 1950, (c) at the end of the war?
- 3. Critical Thinking**
Making Predictions Based on this map, do you think communist forces would have won control over all of Korea if the UN had not sent in troops?

As the fighting got close to the Chinese border Chinese troops were sent in from China. They pushed back the North Koreans. Soon there was a deadlock between the North Koreans and the United Nations forces. General MacArthur spoke out against President Truman in stating he wanted to push forward and win the war. President Truman then fired General Douglas MacArthur.

Four tank landing ships unload men and equipment on Red Beach one day after the amphibious landings in South Korea.



Finally, after a truce was signed in 1953, Korea was divided at the [38th parallel](#) into two countries, just as it had been before the war. The 38th parallel was the invisible line of division between North Korea and South Korea. It became known as a [demilitarized zone](#), or an area with no military forces. To help preserve the truce, the United States continues to station thousands of American troops in South Korea. Although North and South Korea remain divided, this war showed that the United States and its allies would fight to stop communist expansion.



Map of the Korean DMZ. The DMZ is given in red. The demarcation line runs in the middle of the DMZ (black line).



Viewing History

Peace Talks

The Korean peace talks dragged on for two long years. Only in mid-1953, was an armistice finally signed. **Drawing**

Conclusions *Why do you think the United States accepted an armistice in Korea without a total victory?*



The Cold War led to increased tensions within the United States. From 1950-1954, [Senator Joseph McCarthy](#) led an effort to search for communist spies within the American government.



[Senator Joseph McCarthy](#)

3. Regional Conflicts

After World War II, colonies in Asia and Africa demanded independence. New nations, such as India, Pakistan, and the Philippines, emerged in Asia. By 1970, fifty independent states had formed in Africa.



Pakistan



Philippines



POLITICAL CARTOON

Skills

American Comic Strips and Communism

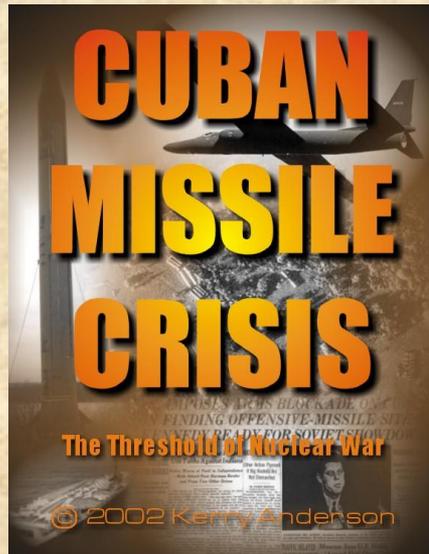
This comic-strip panel appeared in an American comic book during the 1950s.

- 1. Comprehension** (a) Who is the man standing by the globe? (b) Who are the other men seated at the table?
- 2. Finding the Main Idea**
What are the men discussing?
- 3. Critical Thinking**
Identifying Points of View What is the cartoonist's opinion of the communist world?

Many regions around the world became battlegrounds in the Cold War struggle between the superpowers. A superpower is a nation with enough military, political, and economic strength to influence events worldwide. The United States developed policies to deal with these countries. Cuba was one of these battlegrounds.



In the 1960's the superpowers clashed over Cuba in the Cuban Missile Crisis. In 1962, the Soviet Union began to build a nuclear missile base in Cuba, President Kennedy responded forcefully. The American navy prevented the Soviets from shipping missiles into Cuba. After a tense week, this was the closest that the United States and the Soviet Union to a nuclear war. Over a thousand Cubans were exiled from their country and forced to settle in the Bay of Pigs.





Viewing History

Caribbean Conflict



A United States plane flies low over a Soviet freighter during the Cuban missile crisis. Americans were checking the boat for any evidence of Soviet missiles aboard. **Identifying Alternatives** *Were there other policies that President Kennedy could have followed to end the missile crisis? Explain.*

Other Parts of Latin America also played a role in the Cold War. The United States intervened throughout the region to stop communism. Between 1950 and 1990, American forces were sent to a number of Latin American countries. In the 1980's, the United States also sought to improve conditions in Latin America. American aid helped in the building of schools, roads, and hospitals.



The Cold War was essentially a rivalry between the two superpowers. By the 1950's, both nations had begun an [arms race](#). Both sides built stockpiles of nuclear bombs and other weapons. By the 1970's the two superpowers had enough weapons to destroy each other and the world many times over.



Geography and History

The Peace Corps

Peace Corps volunteers work hard during their two-year tour of duty. A volunteer might set up a health clinic, build an irrigation system, or start a new school. Many volunteers live in remote villages. All are expected to use the local language and live as the local people do.

Peace Corps members feel that they do much more than building, doctoring, and teaching. Said one:

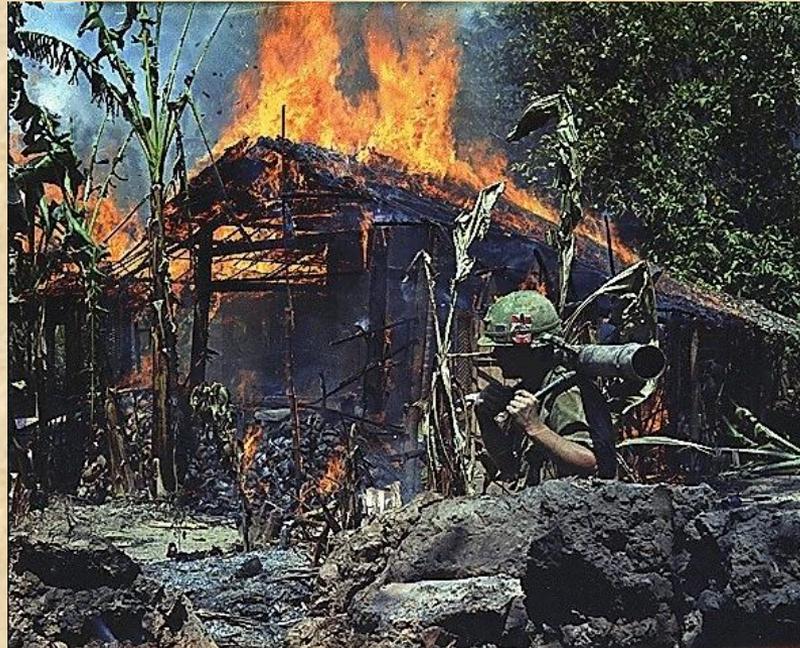
“By communications on a person-to-person level the people of the world may some day eliminate the word [stranger]. Communication, after all, can breed understanding. And understanding can breed peace. I like to think that is what the Peace Corps is all about.”



What are some jobs that Peace Corps volunteers do?

Latin America faced many economic problems. Many poor Latin Americans saw communism as a solution to their problems. In 1961, President Kennedy offered aid to Latin America in a program called Alliance for Progress. Kennedy also set up the Peace Corps.





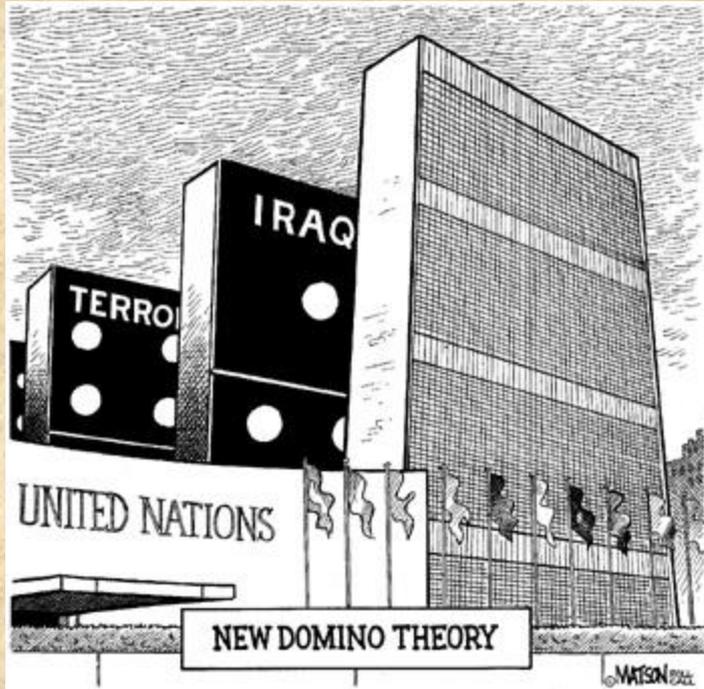
**Viet Cong
base camp
after an
attack**

4. The War in Vietnam

After World War II, the French colony of Vietnam in Southeast Asia was divided into two nations. North Vietnam received aid from the Soviet Union. South Vietnam was backed by the United States. In the early 1960's, communist rebels in South Vietnam threatened to overthrow the government. As the discontent grew, many peasants joined the Vietcong guerillas. Guerrillas are fighters that made hit and run attacks.



President Kennedy believed in the domino theory. He reasoned that if South Vietnam fell to the communists, neighboring countries in Southeast Asia would also fall-like a row of dominoes.



GEOGRAPHY

Skills

During the Vietnam War, North Vietnam supplied arms to communist guerrillas in South Vietnam. The system of supply routes from the North was known as the Ho Chi Minh Trail.

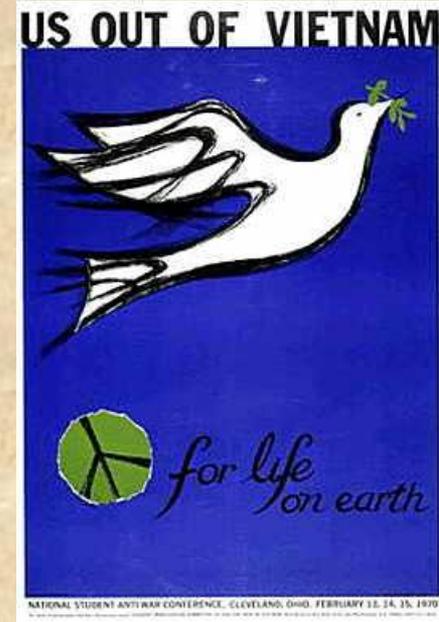
- 1. Location** On the map, locate (a) North Vietnam, (b) South Vietnam, (c) Gulf of Tonkin, (d) Hanoi, (e) Cambodia.
- 2. Movement** Through which countries did the Ho Chi Minh Trail run?
- 3. Critical Thinking**
Applying Information According to the domino theory, what nations would be threatened if the Communists won control of South Vietnam?



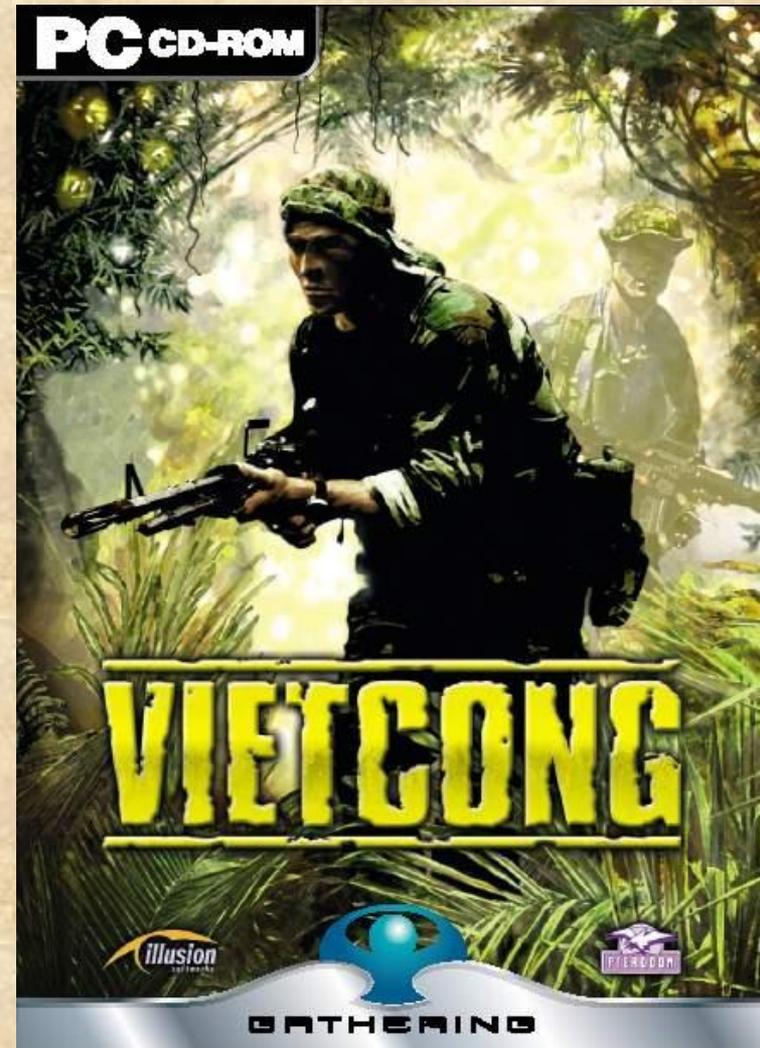
Kennedy sent military advisers to South Vietnam. Later, President Lyndon Johnson began to send troops. By 1968, more than 500,000 American troops had been sent to fight in the Vietnam War.



As the war became more intense, Americans divided into hawks and doves. Hawks felt that the United States had to stop the spread of communism. Doves said the country should not interfere in a civil war among the Vietnamese. Also, they believed that the money spent on the war would be better spent at home. By the late 1960's many antiwar protests took place, especially on college campuses.



The United States tried to remove itself from the conflict. The turning point was the Test Offensive. Communist rebels, known as [Vietcong](#), stormed [Saigon](#), the capital of South Vietnam. It was clear that American troops could not win the war. After years of peace talks, American troops finally left Vietnam in 1974. The war had a number of important results in both the United States and Southwest Asia. Many Americans began to wonder how far the country should go in the fight against communism.





Vietnam Veterans Memorial

Since 1982, millions of Americans have visited the Vietnam Veterans Memorial in Washington, DC. The memorial is composed of two black granite walls inscribed with the names of more than 58,000 Americans killed in Vietnam. Says designer Maya Lin: "This memorial is for those who have died, and for us to remember."



Take It to the NET

Virtual Field Trip For an interactive look at the Vietnam Veterans Memorial, visit *The American Nation* section of www.phschool.com.

The Cold War Ends

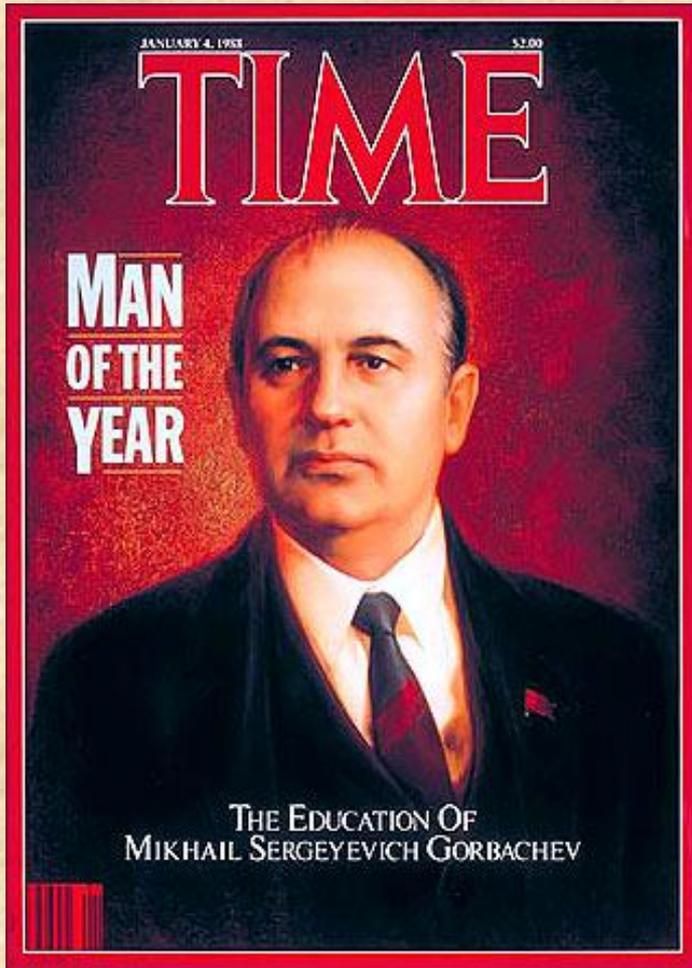
In the 1970's President [Richard M. Nixon](#) looked for ways to ease world tensions. He improved relations with the People's Republic of China by visiting the country in 1972. Nixon toured the [Great Wall of China](#) by visiting the country in 1972 and attendee state dinners with Chinese leaders. This paved the way for diplomatic relations between the United States and China in 1979.



(NAT ARCHIVES & RECORD ADMIN.)



President Nixon also sought friendlier ties with the Soviet Union. He visited the country in 1972 in an effort to promote friendlier relations and reduce tensions between the two superpowers. The policy was known as détente. Détente is defined as an effort to reduce tensions between the superpowers. It resulted in increased trade and other contacts. More importantly, the two countries signed treaties to limit nuclear weapons. Then, in 1979, the Soviet Union invaded Afghanistan. Tensions increased again. ³⁸



Cracks began to appear in the Soviet empire in the mid-1980. A new Soviet leader, [Mikhail Gorbachev](#), started economic and political reforms. Gorbachev called for [glasnost](#), a policy of speaking openly. Soon, people were demanding change throughout the Soviet Union and satellite states of Eastern Europe. By 1989, communist governments had fallen in most European countries.

In 1991, the Soviet Union ceased to exist. It broke up into 15 separate nations. The largest and most powerful of these was Russia. The new countries began the difficult task of introducing democracy and free market economies. The United States and its western allies attempted to help the transition by providing advice and economic aid. Finally, the long Cold War, which had cost the United States trillions of dollars and often divided the nation, came to an end.



Cause and Effect

Causes

- Soviet Union takes control of Eastern European nations
- Communism gains influence in Western Europe, the Middle East, and Asia
- Western powers fear Soviet expansion

THE COLD WAR

Effects

- Arms race between United States and Soviet Union results in heavy military spending
- Western powers and Soviet Union create separate military alliances
- Armed conflicts erupt in Korea and Vietnam
- United States and Soviet Union compete for influence in developing nations

Effects Today

- United States is world's greatest military power
- Eastern Europe and Russia are struggling to create democratic governments
- Southeast Asian countries are still recovering from wars

GRAPHIC ORGANIZER

Skills

For 45 years, the Cold War pitted the United States against the Soviet Union.

1. Comprehension

(a) What events in Europe helped spark the Cold War? (b) Which effects of the Cold War involved Americans in actual fighting?

2. Critical Thinking

Analyzing Information

How did the Cold War help the United States become the world's greatest military power?

The End