

15: THE COLD WAR

ESSENTIAL TERMS



PEOPLE AND GROUPS

Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels: German intellectuals who promoted the ideas of socialism and communism and wrote the Communist Manifesto.

Vladimir Lenin: Leader of the Bolsheviks and first communist leader of the Soviet Union.

Josef Stalin: One of Lenin's supporters and the second leader of the Soviet Union from 1922-1953.

Nikita Khrushchev: Soviet leader from 1953-1964. He was leader during the Cuban Missile Crisis.

Leonid Brezhnev: Soviet leader from 1964-1982.

Mikhail Gorbachev: Last leader of the Soviet Union from 1985-1991. He promoted government reform and negotiated with the United States.

Boris Yeltsin: Russian leader who demanded greater reform during the 1980s. He opposed the 1991 coup and became the first president of independent Russia after the fall of the Soviet Union.

Franklin D. Roosevelt: President of the United States during the Great Depression and most of WWII.

United Nations (UN): An organization in which the nations of the world meet to cooperate and solve disputes. The headquarters is in New York City.

Security Council: The small group of nations that has the authority to set policy for the United Nations. It includes five permanent members: the US, UK, France, Russia and China.

George Kennan: The State Department official who developed the policy of containment.

George Marshall: American Secretary of State who proposed using American money to rebuild Europe. He believed that if countries had a strong economy they would be less likely to fall to communism.

NATO: Alliance that includes the United States, Canada, and most of the nations of Western Europe as well as Greece and Turkey. It was created to counter the threat of the Soviet Union.

Warsaw Pact: The collective security agreement that was the answer to NATO. It included the Soviet Union and most of Eastern Europe.

Mao Zedong: Leader of the Chinese communists. He became the first leader of mainland China after the communist takeover.

Douglas MacArthur: American hero of WWII in the Pacific. He had led the occupation of Japan and was commander in the Korean War until he was relieved by President Truman for insubordination.

Kim Il-Sung: First leader of communist North Korea.

Kim Jong-il: Second leader of North Korea from 1994-2011

Kim Jong-un: Third leader of North Korea from 2011 to the present.

John F. Kennedy (JFK): Democratic president from 1961-1963. He was president during the Cuban Missile Crisis.

Lyndon B. Johnson: Vice president for John F. Kennedy and president from 1963-1968.

Fidel Castro: Communist leader who led the Cuban Revolution in 1959.

Alger Hiss: American diplomat who had advised Roosevelt at Yalta and was involved in the creation of the United Nations. He was denounced as a communist during the Red Scare. He was convicted but evidence of his guilt is inconclusive.

Julius and Ethel Rosenberg: Julius Rosenberg was scientist who gave nuclear secrets to the Soviet Union. He and his wife Ethel were tried, convicted and put to death during the Red Scare.

Joseph McCarthy: Senator who became famous as an accuser during the Red Scare. He rarely presented evidence and was eventually discredited.

Reds: Derogatory nickname for communists.

Hollywood 10: A group of ten Hollywood writers, producers and directors who were accused of being communist. They refused to answer questions from HUAC and were blacklisted.

Dr. Henry Kissinger: National Security Advisor to President Nixon. He believed in realpolitik and was instrumental in the negotiations with the Soviet Union and China that were part of the détente policy.

Ronald Reagan: American president from 1981-1989. He abandoned détente and supported a more confrontational stance toward the Soviet Union based on an ideological view of the conflict. In his second term he began negotiating with Gorbachev and is credited with helping end the Cold War.



SPEECHES

Kennedy's Inaugural Address: President Kennedy's speech in 1961 and occasion of some of his most famous statements.

We Choose to Go to the Moon: Speech by JFK in 1961 in which he challenged America to send a man to the moon before 1970.

McCarthy's 205 Communists: McCarthy claimed to know of 205 communists working in the State Department during a speech in 1950. He never provided evidence but his claim and subsequent Senate hearings made him famous.

Atoms for Peace: A speech given by President Eisenhower in 1953 (and the government programs that followed) that encouraged the civilian use of nuclear technology.

Eisenhower's Farewell Address: Televised address by departing President Eisenhower in 1961 shortly before Kennedy took office. Eisenhower warned of the dangers of all-or-nothing thinking and the growing influence of a military industrial complex.

Evil Empire Speech: 1982 speech by President Ronald Reagan in which he condemned communism and the Soviet Union calling it an "Evil Empire."

Tear Down This Wall: 1987 speech by Ronald Reagan in West Berlin in which he challenged Gorbachev to open the Iron Curtain.



KEY CONCEPTS

Capitalism: An economic system in which people are free to make choices about how to spend money, where to work, etc.

Free Market Economy: Another term for capitalism.

Communism: An economic systems in which the government controls all production and distribution. In theory, everyone works and everyone shares.

Collective Security: An agreement between nations in which they agree to treat an attack on any member of the agreement as an attack on all members.

Stalemate: A situation in war in which neither side is able to win.

Proliferation: The spread of weapons, especially nuclear weapons to multiple countries.

Mutually Assured Destruction (MAD): The situation in which both the United States and Soviet Union could destroy one another in a nuclear exchange. Because starting a war meant assured destruction, no side would start the war

Military Industrial Complex: President Eisenhower's term for the relationship between the military, weapons manufacturers, and lawmakers who allocated funding for weapons systems.

Missile Gap: A perceived lack of ICBMs compared to the Soviet Union. There was actually no gap, but the public became concerned with Senator Kennedy repeatedly used the term to stoke fear during his 1960 presidential campaign.

Realpolitik: Policies based on practical rather than moral or ideological goals.

Proxy Wars: Wars that were not fought between the United States and Soviet Union. However, the superpowers supported either side and the wars were viewed as a stand-in for real face-to-face conflict.



GOVERNMENT & MILITARY AGENCIES

Strategic Air Command: The organization in the American military responsible for America's nuclear bombers and missiles.

Apollo Program: NASA program to develop the technology to send a man to the Moon.

Peace Corps: A group of young American volunteers who travel to developing nations to provide support and help spread goodwill.

Central Intelligence Agency (CIA): America's spy agency.

House Un-American Activities Committee (HUAC): Special committee formed by members of the House of Representatives to investigate communists in the United States. Future president Richard Nixon was a member of the committee and they investigated the Hollywood 10.



EVENTS

Yalta Conference: February 1945 meeting between President Roosevelt, Josef Stalin, and Great Britain's Prime Minister Winston Churchill to make agreements about the post-WWII world.

Potsdam Conference: A conferences in July and August 1945 between President Truman, Josef Stalin and Great Britain's Clement Attlee in which the leaders agreed to divide Germany into four zones of occupation.

Decolonization: The process by which former colonies in the Third World gained independence from European powers in the first few decades after WWII.

Berlin Airlift: Operation mounted by the United States and Great Britain to supply West Berlin by air when Stalin cut off the city's land access in 1948-1949. The Airlift was a success despite tremendous obstacles and the city was saved from communist takeover.

1960 Presidential Election: Election between Senator John F. Kennedy and Vice President Richard Nixon. Kennedy won in a close popular vote.

Kennedy-Nixon Debates: The first televised presidential election debates.

Cuban Revolution: Communist overthrow of Batista's Cuban government in 1958, led by Fidel Castro.

Bay of Pigs Invasion: 1961 attack by anti-communist Cuban exiles who had been trained by the CIA in an effort to start a revolution against Castro. The invasion failed and Kennedy refused to support the invaders.

Cuban Missile Crisis: 13-day standoff in 1962. The Soviet Union had placed nuclear missiles in Cuba and Kennedy demanded that they be removed. It was the closest the world ever came to nuclear war.

Second Red Scare: The period in the late 1940s and early 1950s when the fear that communists were infiltrating America drove wild accusations and political investigations.

McCarthyism: Another term often used for the Second Red Scare which refers to the unfounded accusations common of the time.

Nixon's Visit to China: 1972 visit by President Nixon to the People's Republic of China. This visit officially reopened the diplomatic relationship between the PRC and the US and the US recognized the PRC government as the representatives of China at the United Nations.

Iran-Contra Scandal: Political scandal in 1986 in which officials in the Reagan Administration illegally sold weapons to Iran and used the money to support the Contras in Nicaragua. The scandal called into question Reagan's ability to manage the day-to-day operations of government.

Reykjavik Summit: 1985 summit between President Reagan and Gorbachev held in Reykjavik, Iceland. It was one of five meetings between the two leaders. At their meeting, they agreed to eliminate all nuclear weapons but their advisors made them reverse this pledge.

Tiananmen Square Massacre: 1989 confrontation between pro-democracy activists and the communist government in Beijing, China. After protesters occupied Tiananmen Square in the center of the city the government ordered the military to break up the protest resulting in hundreds, possibly thousands of deaths.

Fall of the Berlin Wall: The demonstrations and reverse of East German policy in November, 1989 that led to the opening of crossing points between East and West Berlin, and the subsequent destruction of the Berlin Wall by the people of Berlin.

Reunification of Germany: 1990 joining of East and West Germany. The East German government ceased to exist and the capital of Germany was moved from Bonn to Berlin.

1991 Coup: Attempt to overthrow the Soviet government of Gorbachev by hard line leaders and generals in August 1991. It failed when the military refused to follow orders from the coup leaders. Gorbachev was returned to power but was weakened, leading to the breakup of the Soviet Union.

Fall of the Soviet Union: December 25, 1991. The various republics of the Soviet Union became independent nations and the Soviet government and communism in the former Soviet Union ceased to exist. This was the final end of the Cold War



LOCATIONS

Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR): The official name of the Soviet Union.

Third World: The traditionally poorer regions of the world including Central and South America, Africa, the Middle East, South Asia and Southeast Asia.

Iron Curtain: The division between Eastern and Western Europe marking the separation between the communist and free worlds.

Berlin Wall: A wall built by the East German government in 1961 to prevent people from escaping to West Berlin. It became a symbol of the division between the free and communist worlds.

Berlin: Capital city of Germany. After WWII it was divided. West Berlin was a small enclave of freedom surrounded by Soviet-dominated East Germany. The city was the site of many standoffs and physical manifestations of the Cold War.

People's Republic of China (PRC): The official name of communist mainland China.

Republic of China (ROC): The official name of non-communist Taiwan.

38th Parallel: The line of latitude that divided North and South Korea before the Korean War. The current boundary still roughly follows the 38th Parallel.

Demilitarized Zone (DMZ): The three-mile wide strip of land that marks the boundary between North and South Korea.

Israel: Nation in the Middle East created in 1948 largely by Jews who escaped the Holocaust. It is a strong ally of the United States but has a violent history with its Arab neighbors.



POLICIES & TREATIES

Containment: The policy of preventing the spread of communist but not trying to eliminate it where it already existed.

Truman Doctrine: President Truman's plan to implement containment and use American money to support countries that were in danger of falling under communist domination.

Marshall Plan: The plan to use American money to rebuild Europe. It was intended to prevent the spread of communism by demonstrating that a free market system would be the path to prosperity.

Domino Theory: American belief that if one nation fell to communism its neighbors would soon follow.

Flexible Response: Kennedy's policy of having more conventional (non-nuclear) weapons so that the United States could use military power without resorting to a nuclear attack.

Partial Test Ban Treaty: 1963 treaty banning nuclear tests in the atmosphere, under water and in space.

Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty: A treaty signed in 1968 by all but four countries in the world. Nations promise not to acquire nuclear weapons (if they don't already possess them) and in exchange they may use nuclear technology for civilian purposes.

SALT I & SALT II: Treaties signed between the United States and Soviet Union in 1972 and 1979 agreeing to reduce the number of nuclear warheads in their arsenals.

Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty: 1972 treaty between the United States and Soviet Union agreeing to limit the development of missiles that could intercept incoming ICBMs.

Helsinki Accords: 1975 agreement between the major nations of the Free and Communist Worlds. It guaranteed respect for boundaries, thus cementing the communist takeover of Eastern Europe, but also committed nations to respect human rights.

Détente: A policy of engaging the Soviet Union in negotiations used by Presidents Nixon, Ford and Carter in the 1970s. It assumed that the end of the Cold War was not imminent so negotiation rather than confrontation was the best policy.