

CHAPTER 24

The Cold War and American Globalism, 1945–1961

CHAPTER SUMMARY

Chapter 24 surveys the history from 1945 to 1961 of the bipolar contest for international power between the United States and the Soviet Union, a contest known as the Cold War. At the end of the Second World War, international relations remained unstable because of: (1) world economic problems, (2) power vacuums caused by the defeat of Germany and Japan, (3) civil wars within nations, (4) the birth of nations resulting from the disintegration of empires, and (5) air power, which made all nations more vulnerable to attack. This unsettled environment encouraged competition between the United States and the Soviet Union, the two most powerful nations at the war's end.

Both the United States and the Soviet Union believed in the rightness of their own political, economic, and social systems, and each feared the other's system. American resolution to avoid appeasement and hold the line against communism, sense of vulnerability in the air age, and determination to prevent an economic depression led to an activist foreign policy characterized by the containment doctrine, economic expansionism, and globalist diplomacy. These factors, along with Truman's anti-Soviet views and his brash personality, intensified Soviet fears of a hostile West.

Despite the fact that the Soviet Union had emerged from the Second World War as a regional power rather than a global menace, United States officials were distrustful of the Soviet Union and reacted to counter what they perceived to be a Soviet threat. They did so because of: (1) their belief in a monolithic communist enemy bent on world revolution, (2) fear that unstable world conditions made United States interests vulnerable to Soviet subversion, and (3) the desire of the United States to use its postwar position of strength to its advantage.

Although Truman acted out of the belief that the Soviets were the masterminds behind North Korea's attack against South Korea, closer analysis of the situation shows the strong likelihood that North Korea started the war for its own nationalistic purposes. We examine the conduct of the war, Truman's problems with General Douglas MacArthur, America's use of atomic diplomacy, and the war's domestic political impact. In the war's aftermath, the globalist foreign policy used to justify it became entrenched in U.S. policy. This, in turn, led to an increase in foreign commitments and military appropriations and solidified the idea of a worldwide Soviet threat, which President Dwight D. Eisenhower and his secretary of state, John Foster Dulles, accepted.

During Eisenhower's administration, this belief and the fear of domestic subversives that accompanied it led to the removal of talented Asian specialists from the Foreign Service, an action that would have dire consequences later on. Despite Eisenhower's doubts about the arms race, the president continued the activist foreign policy and advanced the nuclear arms race, continuing the action–reaction relationship between the superpowers.

The process of decolonization begun during the First World War accelerated in the aftermath of the Second World War. As scores of new nations were born, the Cold-War rivalry between the United States and the Soviet Union began. Both superpowers began to compete for friends among

the newly emerging nations of the Third World; however, both the United States and the Soviet Union encountered obstacles in finding allies among these nations. The factors that created obstacles for the United States in its search for Third World friends included: America's negative view toward the neutralist movement among Third World nations, the way in which the United States characterized Third World peoples, embarrassing incidents in the United States in which official representatives of the Third World were subjected to racist practices and prejudices, America's intolerance of the disorder caused by revolutionary nationalism, and America's great wealth.

To counter nationalism, radical doctrines, and neutralism in the Third World, the United States undertook development projects and, through the United States Information Agency, engaged in propaganda campaigns. In addition, during the Eisenhower administration the United States began increasingly to rely on the covert actions of the Central Intelligence Agency, as demonstrated in the Guatemalan and Iranian examples. Moreover, the attitude of the United States toward neutralism and toward the disruptions caused by revolutionary nationalism may be seen in the discussion of America's deepening involvement in Vietnam and in the Eisenhower administration's reaction to the events surrounding the 1956 Suez Crisis. In the aftermath of that crisis, fear of a weakened position in the Middle East led to the issuance of the Eisenhower Doctrine, which in turn was used to justify American military intervention in Lebanon in 1958, thus expanding the nation's "global watch" approach to the containment of Communism.

SECTION-BY SECTION IDENTIFICATIONS AND FOCUS QUESTIONS

I. Introduction

Identify each of the following items. That is, give an explanation or description of the item. Answer these questions: Who? What? Where? When? Then **explain the historical significance** of each item. That is, establish the historical context of the item: establish the item as the result of other factors existing in the society under study (that is, answer the question, Why?) and establish the political, social, economic and/or cultural consequences of the item (that is, answer the question, So What?)

Vietminh
Ho Chi Minh
Containment
The Cold War
The Third World

What relationship did Ho Chi Minh and his nationalist supporters hope to cultivate with the U.S. at the end of World War II?

What policy did Truman adopt toward Vietnam and Ho Chi Minh? Why?

How did American leaders often misinterpret the actions and decisions of Third World leaders?

What criticisms did some Americans level against American Cold War policy?
What risks did those dissenters run?

Pay careful attention to the list of events on page 696. A similar chronology appears at the beginning of each chapter and is the equivalent of “Cliff’s Notes” to the chapter.

II. From Allies to Adversaries

Identify each of the following items. That is, give an explanation or description of the item. Answer these questions: Who? What? Where? When? Then **explain the historical significance** of each item. That is, establish the historical context of the item: establish the item as the result of other factors existing in the society under study (that is, answer the question, Why?) and establish the political, social, economic and/or cultural consequences of the item (that is, answer the question, So What?)

The Bretton Woods Conference (1944)
The World Bank
The International Monetary Fund
The Truman-Molotov encounter
Atomic diplomacy
The Baruch Plan
George F. Kennan
The “long telegram”
Churchill’s “Iron Curtain” speech
United Nations Security Council
Henry A. Wallace
The Greek civil war
The Truman Doctrine

How do the visual and textual portraits of Stalin presented in the two editions of *Look* magazine featured on page 699 differ? What inferences can you draw from those two depictions about the nature of the U.S.—Soviet relationship at those two points in time?

Why does Kamensky describe the post-war international climate as unsettled and volatile?

What gain or benefit did the United States and the Soviet Union hope to reap from Third World countries after World War II?

What were the Soviet Union’s most pressing goals in the post-war period?

Despite coming out of the war with its infrastructure intact and confident in the security of its borders, the U.S. was still plagued by a sense of vulnerability. Why? What sort of post-war world did the U.S. want?

What attitudes did Stalin and Truman each bring to foreign policy? How did these attitudes exacerbate and extend tensions between the two countries?

When did the Cold War begin?

How did Soviet actions in Poland, Romania, Hungary, and Czechoslovakia contribute to the onset of the Cold War? How did the Soviets justify their intervention in those countries' affairs?

Why did relations between the Soviet Union and the United States turn hostile soon after their victory in World War II?

What impact did the growing Soviet-American tensions have on the operation of the newly-created United Nations?

Was the Cold War inevitable? Why or why not?

III. Containment in Action

Identify each of the following items. That is, give an explanation or description of the item. Answer these questions: Who? What? Where? When? Then **explain the historical significance** of each item. That is, establish the historical context of the item: establish the item as the result of other factors existing in the society under study (that is, answer the question, Why?) and establish the political, social, economic and/or cultural consequences of the item (that is, answer the question, So What?)

- the "Mr. X" article
- the containment doctrine
- Walter Lippmann
- the Marshall Plan
- the National Security Act of 1947
- National Security Council
- Central Intelligence Agency
- the Berlin blockade (the "first Berlin Crisis") and airlift
- Federal Republic of Germany
- German Democratic Republic
- North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO)
- the hydrogen bomb
- NSC-68

What goals did America pursue in Europe in the first few years of the Cold War?
How did the Soviets react to those efforts?

In the summer of 1949, why did it appear to some observers that Truman was on his way to winning the Cold War?

What “twin shocks” in late 1949 disabused Americans of any expectation of quick victory for the US in the Cold War? What was Truman’s response to these events?

How did George Kennan’s attitudes toward the Cold War change in the two and a half years after he wrote the “X” article? What fate befell him?

IV. The Cold War in Asia

Identify each of the following items. That is, give an explanation or description of the item. Answer these questions: Who? What? Where? When? Then **explain the historical significance** of each item. That is, establish the historical context of the item: establish the item as the result of other factors existing in the society under study (that is, answer the question, Why?) and establish the political, social, economic and/or cultural consequences of the item (that is, answer the question, So What?)

Douglas MacArthur
Japanese reconstruction
Jiang Jieshi
Mao Zedong
People’s Republic of China
Formosa
the China lobby
Indochina
Ho Chi Minh

How did the implementation of containment differ in Japan and China?

Why did the US back Jiang against Mao Zedong’s communists in the Chinese civil war? Why did the communists win the Chinese civil war?

What were the arguments for and against US recognition of the People’s Republic of China? When did the U.S. recognize the PRC?

Why did the US refuse to help Vietnamese nationalists in their quest for independence given its dislike of French colonial policy there?

V. The Korean War

Identify each of the following items. That is, give an explanation or description of the item. Answer these questions: Who? What? Where? When? Then **explain the historical significance** of each item. That is, establish the historical context of the item: establish the item as the result of other factors existing in the society under study (that is, answer the question, Why?) and establish the political, social, economic and/or cultural consequences of the item (that is, answer the question, So What?)

the Democratic People's Republic of Korea
the Republic of Korea
Kim Il Sung
Syngman Rhee
the 38th parallel
the Korean War
the Pusan perimeter
the Inchon landing
the Korean armistice
the ANZUS Treaty

What factors contributed to American involvement in the war between North and South Korea?

Was Truman right that North Korea's invasion of South Korea was a Soviet plot to extend communism? To what extent were the Soviets involved in the Korean War? Why didn't the Soviets veto the UN Security Council's vote to defend South Korea against North Korea?

Did Truman seek a Congressional declaration of war in Korea? Why not?

How many nations contributed troops to the UN forces in the Korean War? What percentage of the UN troops were American? South Korean?

How did Truman's goals for America in the Korean War change during the course of the war?

Why did the Chinese enter the war?

Why did Truman fire MacArthur?

Why was an armistice so slow in coming and what were its terms?

What were the domestic and international consequences of the Korean War?

VI. Unrelenting Cold War

Identify each of the following items. That is, give an explanation or description of the item. Answer these questions: Who? What? Where? When? Then **explain the historical significance** of each item. That is, establish the historical context of the item: establish the item as the result of other factors existing in the society under study (that is, answer the question, Why?) and establish the political, social, economic and/or cultural consequences of the item (that is, answer the question, So What?)

John Foster Dulles
Liberation, massive retaliation and deterrence
The “New Look” military
Brinkmanship
Domino theory
Allen Dulles
The MKULTRA program*
ICBM
Sputnik
NASA
The “People-to-People Campaign”
The “kitchen debate”
Nikita Krushchev
The Hungarian uprising (1956)
The Berlin crisis of 1958 (the “second” Berlin crisis)
The Warsaw Pact
The U-2 incident
The Jinmen-Mazu crisis
The Formosa Resolution

In what ways and to what extent did Eisenhower and Dulles’s approach to the Cold War differ from Truman’s? What new approaches to the Cold War did Eisenhower and Dulles suggest? To what extent did they pursue those new approaches, and to what extent did they continue Truman’s approach?

How did Eisenhower use the CIA as an instrument of US foreign policy?

Why was the US unable to reap any propaganda advantage from the display of Soviet brute force in Hungary?

* Occasionally, important items will be inadequately described in your textbook. For these items, you will need to do some independent research. As a first step, you can “Google” the item. Or you could use a paper-based American History reference work such as *The Oxford Companion to United States History*.

VII. The Struggle for the Third World

Identify each of the following items. That is, give an explanation or description of the item. Answer these questions: Who? What? Where? When? Then **explain the historical significance** of each item. That is, establish the historical context of the item: establish the item as the result of other factors existing in the society under study (that is, answer the question, Why?) and establish the political, social, economic and/or cultural consequences of the item (that is, answer the question, So What?)

Third World neutralism
The Green Revolution
The US Information Agency (USIA) propaganda campaigns
“People’s Capitalism”
Jacobo Arbenz Guzmán
Fidel Castro
Fulgencio Batista
Shah of Iran
Mohammed Mossadegh
Gamal Abdul Nasser
the Suez crisis
the Eisenhower Doctrine
Dienbienphu
the 1954 Geneva Accords
the 17th parallel
Bao Dai
Ngo Dinh Diem
The Republic of Vietnam
The National Liberation Front (the Vietcong)
The “national security state” (see “Legacy for a People and a Nation,” p. 722)

Why did the Third World become an increasingly important theater in the Cold War during Eisenhower’s presidency?

How did the United States fight the Cold War in the Third World?

How did American Cold War efforts in the Third World reflect traditional American notions of Manifest Destiny and the “White Man’s Burden”?

Why were domestic racism and segregation within the U.S. handicaps to America in her efforts to win the Cold War in the Third World?

Why did Eisenhower order the CIA to overthrow Castro?

Why did the United States support the creation of Israel? Why did some Americans object to America's support and recognition of Israel?

In the years after the creation of the state of Israel, what was the focus of American policy in the Middle East? What economic and political factors influenced the development of US foreign policy in the Middle East?

Why did Eisenhower demand that English, French, and Israeli troops be pulled out of the Suez?

What advice did Senator Lyndon B. Johnson give Eisenhower as Eisenhower considered using American military force to help the French efforts to stop communism in Vietnam?

After the Geneva Accords were signed, why did the US promptly begin trying to undermine them and how did it do so?

How did American actions in Vietnam evolve during Eisenhower's presidency?

VIII. Final Review Questions

Why did relations between the Soviet Union and the United States turn hostile soon after their victory in World War II?

When and why did the Cold War expand from a struggle over the future of Europe and central Asia to one encompassing virtually the whole globe?

By what means did the Truman and Eisenhower administrations seek to expand America's global influence in the late 1940's and the 1950's?