

Cold War Conflicts

Enduring Understanding: Events during the Cold War affected the world politically, socially, and economically. To understand the significance of the Cold War, you will analyze the political and technological competition between the Soviet Union and the United States for global influence. This will include the Korean Conflict, the Berlin Wall, and Vietnam War, the Cuban Missile Crisis, the “space race” and the threat of nuclear annihilation.



Cold War Events: The Korean War

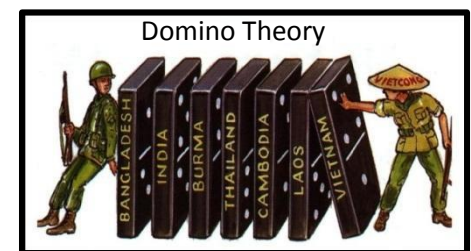
The spread of communism had a major impact on Korea. As a consequence of surrendering at the end of the World War II, Japan had to give up all of its colonies. Korea had been a Japanese colony since the Sino-Japanese and Russo Japanese Wars in 1894 -1895 and 1904-1905 respectively. When Japan surrendered, Korea gained independence.



Section Review:

1. How did Korea become an independent country after World War II?

In the continual competition over political and economic ideologies, the Soviet Union supported the development of communism in Korea while the United States supported the development of a democracy. The United States based their involvement on the “domino theory.” The idea was that if one nation fell to communism, then others, like dominos, would also fall to communism. The idea of containment spread from Europe to Asia as the United States tried to stop the spread of communism to avoid the domino effect.



Section Review:

2. What is the domino theory?

3. What policy did the United States try to use to avoid the domino theory in Asia?



In order to avoid civil war in Korea over political and economic ideology Korea was divided into two parts. The Democratic People’s Republic of Korea (commonly referred to as **North Korea**) was a communist nation supported by the Soviet Union and the Republic of Korea (commonly referred to as **South Korea**) was a democratic nation supported by the United States. The peninsula was divided at the **thirty-eighth parallel**. This division eventually became the main cause of the Korean War.

Section Review:

4. What steps were taken to avoid civil war in Korea?

5. What role did the United States and the Soviet Union play in this decision?

6. Where was Korea divided?

The **Korean War** began in 1950 when North Korea invaded South Korea with the hope of uniting the peninsula under one communist regime. The United States, led by President Harry Truman, and the United Nations sent troops to support South Korea. The Soviets assisted the North Koreans by giving them money and weapons, and the Communist Chinese soon joined in sending troops to help North Korea, as well. The war became a stalemate and a cease-fire agreement was signed. Korea remained divided at the thirty-eighth parallel, which was made a demilitarized zone.

Section Review:

7. What action started the Korean War?
8. Why did North Korea invade South Korea?
9. What role did the US and USSR play in the Korean War?
10. What ended the fighting in the Korean War?
11. What was the major outcome of the Korean War?

The former Iron Curtain



The Soviet Union came to dominate Eastern Europe during the Cold War, dividing Europe into two regions: a democratic Western Europe and a communist Eastern Europe. Prime Minister Winston Churchill coined the phrase “**Behind the iron curtain**” to describe the area of the continent under communist control. Living conditions between East and West Berlin, East and West Germany and Eastern and Western Europe greatly differed. This was due to the lack of many consumer goods in the eastern communist areas. This difference between east and west caused many **defections** (fleeing) from the communist east to the democratic west, especially in Berlin. Because of this, the **Berlin Wall** was built in 1961 by the Communists in East Berlin in order to prevent people from defecting to West Berlin. The Berlin Wall symbolized the iron curtain that separated the democratic west from the communist east.

Section Review:

12. Why was Europe divided into two regions during the Cold War?
13. Who coined the phrase “Behind the Iron Curtain” and what does it mean?
14. Why were living conditions so poor behind the iron curtain?
15. Why was the Berlin Wall built?

Cold War Events: The Vietnam War



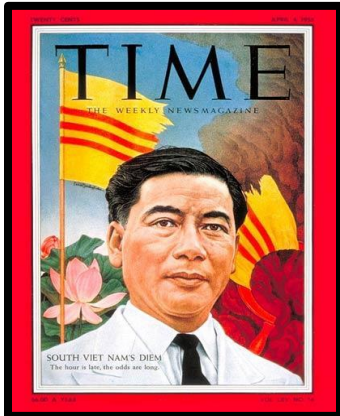
The **Vietnam War** was another “hot” extension of the Cold War. The French wanted to reassert their control over Indochina after World War II ended, but the Vietnamese nationalists wanted self-rule. They were led by a strong communist leader, **Ho Chi Minh**. Fearing the “domino theory”, the United States gave the French money and weapons to fight the Communists.



Section Review:

16) Why did the US give France money and weapons to fight in Vietnam?

17) What did the Vietnamese nationalists want?



Although the United States provided money and weapons to the French, Ho Chi Minh and his communist forces were able to defeat the French in 1954. After the French were defeated, Vietnam was divided into two regions at **the seventeenth parallel**. The northern part became communist under the leadership of Ho Chi Minh, and the southern part was established as non-communist and led by **Ngo Dinh Diem**. Ngo Dinh Diem's regime was corrupt. Ho Chi Minh, who was very popular in the north, invaded the south in order to unify Vietnam under communist rule. To contain communism, the United States



began sending weapons and advisors to South Vietnam in the 1950s. In the mid-1960s under President Lyndon Johnson, American troops were sent to help the South Vietnamese.

Section Review:

18) Who was the communist leader of Vietnam?

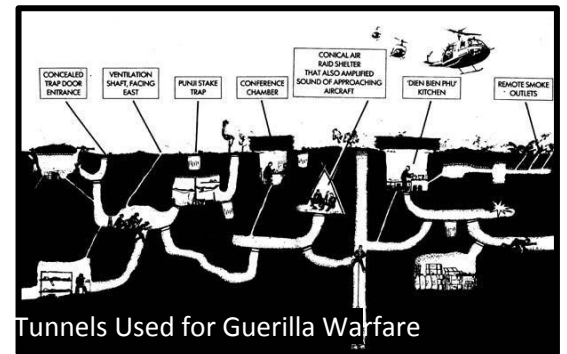
19) Who was the non-communist leader of Vietnam?

20) Where was Vietnam split?

21) Why did President Johnson send American troops Vietnam?



While in Vietnam American soldiers were not only fighting the North Vietnamese, but they also fought the **Vietcong**, communists in South Vietnam. The communists were very successful in their use of guerilla warfare against the United States. The Vietcong employed guerilla tactics such as the use of tunnels, booby-traps, teenaged plain-clothed militia, and primitive weapons such as the "Punji trap" which were sharp



spikes hidden in pits. These, along with the use of machine guns and modern weapons provided by China and the Soviet Union, proved to be very deadly. A total of 58,156 American soldiers died in Vietnam and 2,338 are still missing in action. Because of the controversy of the Vietnam War, many soldiers came home to a United States in social turmoil.

Section Review:

22) What group helped the North Vietnamese in South Vietnam?

23) What type of fighting did the Vietcong use?

24) What type of weapons were used during the Vietnam War?



The South Vietnamese government did not have the support of the Vietnamese people, and the United States, facing their own lack of support at home, could not achieve a victory. The United States withdrew, and the Communists took over South Vietnam and unified the country under communist rule in 1975.



Section Review:

25) Why were the noncommunists unsuccessful in the Vietnam War?

26) What was the outcome of the Vietnam War?

Cuban Missile Crisis



The **Cuban Missile Crisis** (1962) was another significant Cold War event with the potential of evolving into a nuclear showdown. **Fidel Castro** became the communist leader of Cuba in 1959. When an American spy plane flew over Cuba and took pictures of Soviet missiles being assembled on the island, **President John F. Kennedy** feared the Soviets would use them to attack the United



Nikita Khrushchev and John F. Kennedy

States. Kennedy decided to implement a naval blockade around Cuba and told the Soviets that they would have to remove the missiles.

For almost two weeks the United States and Soviet Union negotiated at the United Nations, while the world fearfully anticipated nuclear annihilation. Both sides made concessions (compromises). The Soviet missiles were removed from Cuba and a direct military confrontation was avoided. In return, the United States removed nuclear missiles from Turkey that were seen as a threat by the Soviet Union.

Section Review:

27) In what year did the Cuban Missile Crisis occur?

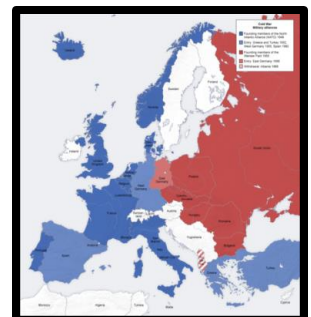
28) Who was the leader of Cuba beginning in 1959?

29) What caused the Cuban Missile Crisis?

30) What was the result of the Cuban Missile Crisis?

Arms and Space Race

The United States and the Soviet Union also competed for global power through their **space** and **arms races**. With the formation of NATO and the Warsaw Pact, both countries strengthened their militaries, increased their armaments, and focused on the buildup of nuclear weapons. Both countries developed hydrogen bombs in the 1950s.



Section Review:

31) What is an arms race?



The Soviets were the first to launch a satellite (**Sputnik**) into space in 1957. In response to the Soviet lead, the United States strengthened its math and science educational programs and created the **National Aeronautics and Space Administration** (NASA), soon launching its own satellite into space. The Americans were the first to land on the moon in 1969. Both the space and arms races continued to escalate until the Cold War's end in 1989.

Section Review:

32) What was the space race?

33) Who launched the first satellite into space? What was it called?

34) What does NASA stand for? Which country created it?

35) Which country successfully placed a man on the moon in 1969?

36) When did the Cold War end?

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