

## A. Super Power

### 1. WWII Conferences

#### a) Yalta & Potsdam Conferences

- (i) At Yalta, Roosevelt and Churchill agreed to Soviet annexation of large sections of eastern Poland
- (ii) Stalin agreed to allow the Poles to hold free elections, a commitment he probably never intended to keep
- (iii) A pro-Soviet regime was installed in Poland. The new president, Truman, met with Stalin and the British leadership at Potsdam in July 1945
- (iv) Potsdam formalized the occupation of Germany
- (v) Fortified by news of the successful testing of an atomic bomb, Truman made no concessions to the Soviets
- (vi) Stalin refused to relinquish his hold on Eastern Europe leading to suspicions mounting and positions hardening on both sides
- (vii) The end of WWII marked the beginning of a new international order dominated by the Soviet American rivalry

### 2. Containing Communism

#### a) Policy of containment

- (i) Stalin seemed intent on expanding Soviet power into central Europe, Asia, and the Middle East
- (ii) By January 1946, Truman moved toward a tougher stand with respect to the Soviet Union
- (iii) George F. Kennan, a foreign service officer, contended that origins of Soviet expansionism lay in the instability and illegitimacy of the Soviet Regime
- (iv) He proposed that the United States firmly but patiently resist Soviet expansion wherever it appeared
- (v) Kennan never elaborated on how, precisely, the Soviet Union should be contained or in what parts of the world the policy would be applied.

#### b) Truman Doctrine

- (i) Statement that the United States would provide political, economic, and military support to any free nation from external or internal authoritarian and communist pressures

- (ii) The Truman Doctrine promised to “Support free peoples resisting subjugation by armed minorities or by outside pressures”
- (iii) During Truman’s second term, the Confrontation between the United States and the Soviet Union increasingly dominated attention
- (iv) The North Atlantic Treaty Organization, designed to protect the West from Soviet aggression, was formed in 1949
- (v) The Soviet detonation of an atomic bomb in September 1949 led Truman to authorized development of a hydrogen bomb
- (vi) Containment failed in Asia. In China, Mao’s communists defeated the nationalists
- (vii) Chiang’s forces fled in disarray to Formosa (Taiwan) in 1949
- (viii) Right - Wing Republicans charged that Truman had not supported the Chinese nationalists strongly enough and had therefore “lost” China.
- (ix) Truman ordered a review of containment
- (x) The resulting report, NSC - 68, called for a massive expansion of the nation’s armed forces
- (xi) Truman initially had initially reservations about the document, but events in Korea changed his mind.

c) Marshall Plan

- (i) The economies of European countries remained unstable after the war
- (ii) In 1947, Secretary of State George C. Marshall proposed a plan by which the US would finance reconstruction of the European Economy
- (iii) Western European powers eagerly seized upon Marshall’s suggestion
- (iv) Although initially tempted, Stalin declined to take part and insisted that eastern European nations do so as well
- (v) After the fall of Czechoslovakia in a communist coup in February 1948, Congress appropriated over \$13 billion for European recovery effort
- (vi) The results were spectacular; by 1951, the economies of Western Europe were booming
- (vii) Western European nations moved toward social, cultural, and economic collaboration
- (viii) Britain, France, and the United States created a single West German Republic from their zones of occupation

- (ix) When the Soviets closed ground access to Berlin, the United States responded with an airlift that forced to Soviets to lift the blockade.

### 3. Cold War Relationships

#### a) Berlin Blockade and Berlin Airlift

- (i) Following WWII, the Potsdam conference formalized the occupation of Germany.
- (ii) Both Germany and Berlin were split into pieces.
- (iii) Berlin was split into West (America Supported) Berlin and East (Kremlin Supported) Berlin
- (iv) Germany itself was split between United States, France, Britain, and Russia
- (v) In an attempt to force the western powers from occupying Germany and thus opening it up to influence, the Soviet Union put a blockade around the capital West Berlin.
- (vi) To prevent war and conflict as well as try to avoid escalating the tensions, America led a series of Airlifts to drop supplies to the West Berliners so that they could hold out for the issue to be resolved
- (vii) Since aggression was the only response to the airlift, the blockade was lifted by the Kremlin in 1949

#### b) Korean War - Reasons for involvement as well as military events and their consequences

- (i) American policymakers had decided that a land war on the Asian continent would be impracticable
- (ii) Yet when communist North Korea invaded South Korea in June 1950, Truman decided on a military response
- (iii) Despite early gains by the North, UN Forced (90% USA) under the command of MacArthur turned the tide and began pressing north
- (iv) MacArthur proposed conquest of North Korea
- (v) Despite opposition from his civilian advisors, Truman authorized an advance as far as the Chinese border
- (vi) In November 1950, 33 divisions of the People's Republic of China army crossed the Yalu River and shattered UN lines
- (vii) MacArthur urged the bombing of Chinese installations north of the Yalu and a blockade of China
- (viii) When Truman rejected his proposals, MacArthur openly criticized the Administration and was removed from command

- (ix) June 1951, the communists agreed to negotiations, which dragged on interminably
  - (x) Initially, the “police action” in Korea was popular with Americans, but the bloody stalemate eroded public enthusiasm.
- c) Vietnam War – Reasons for involvement as well as military events and their consequences
- (i) Both Truman and Eisenhower provided aid to France’s efforts to defeat the Viet Minh in Indochina
  - (ii) However, during the siege of Dien Bien Phu in 1954, Eisenhower refused to commit American personnel to the struggle
  - (iii) France soon surrendered; and France, Great Britain, the Soviet Union, and China signed an agreement that divided Vietnam at the 17th parallel and called for a national election in 1956
  - (iv) North Vietnam, led by Ho Chi Minh, established a communist government
  - (v) In South Vietnam, Ngo Dinh Diem overthrew the emperor, and the United States provided support and advice to his new government
  - (vi) The planned election was never held, and Vietnam remained divided
  - (vii) Fearing that Ho Chi Minh would defeat him, Ngo Dinh Diem, the American-backed leader of South Vietnam, cancelled the election and, with American assistance, attempted to build a new nation
  - (viii) Viet Minh units that remained in the south (later known as Viet Cong) formed secret cells and waited until the late 1950s where they had gained strength and become more militant
  - (ix) In May 1959, Viet Cong guerrillas began an insurgency that gave them control of large sections of the countryside
  - (x) As a senator, Kennedy had backed Diem; moreover, he wanted to demonstrate his toughness after the Bay of Pigs
  - (xi) Thus, he began to expand the American commitment to Vietnam
  - (xii) By 1963, there were over 16,000 American military personnel in South Vietnam, and 120 American soldiers had been killed
  - (xiii) In spite of that effort, Diem’s regime was faltering by 1963

- (xiv) Kennedy sent word to dissident Vietnamese generals that he would support them if they ousted Diem, after which the generals took power to November 1 and killed Diem
- (xv) After Diem's assassination the situation in South Vietnam continued to deteriorate
- (xvi) Alarmed over the growing successes of the Vietcong, President Johnson engaged in a gradual buildup of American forces in Vietnam
- (xvii) Johnson used the Gulf of Tonkin Resolution to justify escalation of the United States' role in Vietnam
- (xviii) By the middle of 1968, more than 538,000 Americans were engaged in a full-scale war that Congress had never declared
- (xix) Some Americans objected to the repressive nature of the government of South Vietnam, the massive aerial bombings, the civilian casualties, the cost of the war, and the loss of American lives
- (xx) Johnson refused to ask Congress to raise taxes to pay for the war, which caused inflation
- (xxi) His statements about the war were often disingenuous
- (xxii) Nevertheless, he and his advisers believed that they were defending freedom
- (xxiii) Although it eventually became evident that military victory was impossible, American leaders were slow to grasp that fact
- (xxiv) Nixon considered his major challenge to be finding an acceptable solution to the war in Vietnam
- (xxv) Nixon proposed to build up the South Vietnamese armed forces so that American troops could withdraw without the communists overrunning the South (Vietnamization)
- (xxvi) United States had failed for 15 years to make South Vietnamese capable of defending themselves
- (xxvii) In October and November 1969, hundreds of thousands of peace marchers converged on Washington, D.C., during Moratorium Days
- (xxviii) On November 3, in a televised statement, Nixon announced plans to bring home all U.S. ground forces
- (xxix) The withdrawal of American troops continued, and a new lottery system for drafting men eliminated some inequities of the old system
- (xxx) However, the war continued, and the human costs of a stalemated war along with revelations of atrocities committed by American troops gave new momentum to the peace movement

- (xxxi) In April 1970, Nixon announced the withdrawal of another 150,000 American soldiers and declared that Vietnamization was proceeding ahead of schedule
- (xxxii) One week later, he authorized an incursion into Cambodian territory to destroy communist bases there
- (xxxiii) At Kent State University in Ohio, after days of demonstrations, National Guardsmen killed four students
- (xxxiv) State police killed two students at Jackson State University in Mississippi
- (xxxv) A wave of student actions closed hundreds of colleges and universities across the nation
- (xxxvi) Faced with this turmoil, the president increased the pace of troop withdrawals, but escalated American bombing raids over North Vietnam
- (xxxvii) He also ordered the mining of Haiphong and other northern ports
- (xxxviii) After time, American troops were removed and the South was left to defend themselves
- (xxxix) Congress refused aid to South Vietnam, and Saigon fell to the North Vietnamese in 1975

d) Nuclear Rivalry and proliferation of Arms control

- (i) When Truman authorized the use of the atom bomb to force the surrender of Japan, he also hoped that it would serve as a counterweight to the numerically superior Red Army
- (ii) Stalin, however, refused to be intimidated and began ramping up efforts to perfect nuclear weapons and grow his arsenal
- (iii) In November 1945, the United States proposed that the United Nations supervise all production of nuclear energy
- (iv) UN created an Atomic Energy Commission, which put forward a plan for the eventual outlawing of atomic weapons backed by unrestricted UN Inspections
- (v) The Soviets rejected the American and UN Plans
- (vi) Following Truman, President Eisenhower relied on a foreign policy that emphasized the United States' nuclear arsenal to achieve international stability after hinting at its willingness to use nuclear weapons
- (vii) Though the Chinese would respond by signing an armistice to end the Korean War, the Soviet Union responded through the growth of their arsenal and the message that they would use theirs as well

e) Cuban Missile Crisis

- (i) Kennedy believed that his chief task was to stop the spread of communism
- (ii) In a departure from Eisenhower's reliance on America's nuclear deterrent, Kennedy proposed to challenge communist aggression wherever it occurred
- (iii) Not long after taking office, he authorized an invasion of Cuba by Cuban exiles
- (iv) The landing at the Bay of Pigs in April 1961 was a complete fiasco
- (v) The affair exposed the US to all the criticism a straightforward assault would have, and it failed to overthrow Castro
- (vi) Castro moved toward the Soviet orbit in response
- (vii) In June 1961, Kennedy and Khrushchev met in Vienna, where Khrushchev blustered about taking West Berlin
- (viii) In August, Khrushchev ordered construction of the Berlin Wall
- (ix) Both sides resumed nuclear testing and built up massive nuclear arsenals
- (x) Kennedy also instructed the CIA to initiate "massive activity" against Castro's regime, which included attempts to assassinate the Cuban dictator
- (xi) In October 1962, Khrushchev placed Soviet troops, bombers, and nuclear missiles in Cuba
- (xii) Kennedy forced a showdown by ordering the United States Navy to halt the shipment of offensive weapons to Cuba
- (xiii) The world held its breath for several days until finally Khrushchev backed down
- (xiv) Although Kennedy's supporters regarded this as Kennedy's finest hour, in retrospect, it appears that he overreacted
- (xv) Both Kennedy and Khrushchev seem to have been sobered by the missile crisis
- (xvi) However, the humiliation Khrushchev suffered contributed to his overthrow by hardliners two years later.

f) Détente

- (i) In the midst of his aggressive actions in Vietnam, Nixon and his foreign policy advisor, Henry Kissinger, embarked on an epic diplomatic venture
- (ii) Rather than treating communism as a monolith, Nixon and Kissinger dealt with Russia and China as separate powers
- (iii) February 1972: Nixon became the first American president to visit the People's Republic of China

- (iv) He followed this unprecedented move by meeting with Soviet Leadership in Moscow
- (v) Nixon returned from Moscow with a treaty calling for limiting strategic arms (SALT)
- (vi) This new policy meant a relaxation of tensions
- (vii) It enabled the United States to play off the two communist superpowers against each other
- (viii) By October 1972, Kissinger had negotiated a draft settlement with the North Vietnamese
- (ix) Shortly before the election, he announced that “peace was at hand”

g) President Reagan and the end of the Cold War

- (i) Ronald Reagan, the former governor of California, ran on the Republican ticket
- (ii) Reagan, a New Deal Democrat turned conservative Republican, promised to decentralize the federal government and to turn over many of its responsibilities to state and local governments
- (iii) Iran released the fifty-two hostages on the day of Reagan’s inauguration
- (iv) Reagan demanded reductions in federal spending and the deficit
- (v) Reagan pursued a hard-line anticommunist foreign policy and engaged in a huge military buildup to meet the threat of the Soviet Union
- (vi) He installed cruise missiles in Europe, sought to undermine the leftist government of Nicaragua, and attempted to bolster the conservative government of El Salvador
- (vii) Reagan used American troops to overthrow a Cuban-backed regime on the Caribbean island of Grenada in 1982
- (viii) He also sent American forces to serve as part of an international peacekeeping force in Lebanon
- (ix) In October 1983, 239 marines died when a Muslim fanatic crashed a truck loaded with explosives into a building that housed the marines
- (x) Reagan’s immense popularity, along with the collapse of the New Deal coalition, resulted in a landslide victory for Reagan
- (xi) The shape of Reagan’s foreign policy changed little at the onset of his second term
- (xii) He maintained his call for a strategic defense initiative, high defense budgets, and vigorous anticommunist policies



- (xiii) After Mikhail S. Gorbachev became the Soviet premier in March 1985, however, Reagan gradually softened the tone of his anti-Soviet rhetoric
- (xiv) During a series of summits, the two leaders began to break down the hostilities and suspicion that separated their nations
- (xv) In 1988, the two superpowers signed a treaty eliminating medium-range nuclear missiles
- (xvi) The president effected a conservative shift in the Supreme Court through his appointment of three justices and the elevation of Associate Justice William Rehnquist to the Chief Justiceships
- (xvii) One of Reagan's nominees, Sandra Day O'Connor, became the first woman to serve in the Supreme Court
- (xviii) Abroad, in an epic turn of events, Gorbachev's reforms in the Soviet Union led to demands for liberalization by the people of Eastern Europe
- (xix) When Gorbachev announced that he would not use force to keep communist governments in power in these nations, the people of Poland, Hungary, Czechoslovakia, Bulgaria, Romania, and East Germany ousted their communist governments and moved toward more democratic forms of government
- (xx) Soviet-style communism had been discredited, and the Warsaw Pact no longer posed a threat
- (xxi) The Berlin Wall crumbled, and Germany began the process of reunification
- (xxii) Bush and Gorbachev signed major arms control agreements
- (xxiii) In December 1989, the United States invaded Panama and forcibly brought its dictator, Manuel Noriega, to America to stand trial on drug conspiracy charges
- (xxiv) Economic conditions in Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union continued to deteriorate
- (xxv) Civil war broke out in Yugoslavia, as Croatia and Slovenia sought independence from the Serbian-dominated central government
- (xxvi) Throughout the Soviet Union, nationalist and anticommunist groups demanded greater control of their affairs
- (xxvii) Various republics demanded independence. Gorbachev opposed the breakup of the Soviet Union and proposed a treaty of union that would have granted greater local autonomy

- (xxviii) Before the treaty could be ratified, hard-line communists attempted a coup
- (xxix) Boris Yeltsin, the anticommunist president of the Russian Republic, defied the rebels and rallied opposition to the coup, which collapsed
- (xxx) In its aftermath, the Communist party was disbanded and the Soviet Union was replaced by a loose federation of independent states