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Khrushchev's Cold War

CHAPTER OUTLINE

- Changes in the USSR
- Peaceful Coexistence
- Challenges in the Satellite Bloc
- The Soviet Sphere of Influence Reaches the Western Hemisphere



CHAPTER TIMELINE

1953	1956	1958	1959	1960
Tito becomes president of Yugoslavia	Khrushchev delivers "secret speech"	Khrushchev becomes premier of the USSR	Castro's Cuban Revolution succeeds	U.S. spy plane is shot down by USSR
Stalin dies	Civil war erupts in Vietnam		United States institutes trade restrictions against Cuba	Non-Alignment Movement is created
United States and USSR invent hydrogen bombs	Polish Uprising occurs		Khrushchev and Nixon square off in the "Kitchen Debate"	Paris Summit takes place
	Hungarian Revolution sparked by Polish uprising		Khrushchev visits United States	USSR and Cuba ally
				Sino-Soviet split deepens



Photos from left to right: John F. Kennedy; West Germans peer over the infamous Berlin Wall; Nikita Khrushchev and Josip Broz Tito, 1955; Fidel Castro reading the newspaper.

E G A 1 3 2 4 T S

1961	1962	1963	1964	1965
United States and USSR develop ABMs	Cuban Missile Crisis heats up the Cold War	Kennedy and Diem are assassinated	The PRC becomes a nuclear power	The first U.S. ground troops arrive in Vietnam
U.S. launches Bay of Pigs invasion	Operation Mongoose goes into effect		U.S. Congress passes the Gulf of Tonkin Resolution	Khrushchev resigns from office
Berlin Wall is built				

To Stalin, the Cold War was a “zero-sum” game—only one side could win. Either the world would be politically and economically structured according to communism, with the USSR firmly in charge, or the world would operate according to democratic principles and a free-market economy. Because the goals and requirements of each ideology were so different, certainly both could not

function simultaneously. But the Cold War was not only about ideology—there were some very practical issues regarding territorial expansion and military superiority that required compromise between the superpowers to ensure the continued survival of all. That desire to expand (ideologically and territorially) while preventing direct conflict, coupled with the inherent financial limitations of a communist economy, led to a shift away from the “zero-sum” game approach in the latter part of the 1950s. Stalin’s successor, Nikita Khrushchev, took a different philosophical approach to fighting the Cold War—peaceful coexistence. In practice, it was not terribly peaceful. Khrushchev used violence to maintain the Soviet grip over the satellite states, and, in a risky move that came dangerously close to World War III, aggressively spread communism into the western hemisphere.

WORKING WITH THE THEMES

THE EFFECTS OF TECHNOLOGY The United States moves far ahead of the USSR in consumer technology, prompting changes in Khrushchev’s approach to expanding communism. The USSR finds a way around the U.S. missile defense system by placing missiles in Cuba.

CHANGING IDENTITIES Stalin’s death leads to Khrushchev’s Thaw and revolution in the satellite states. The people of Cuba reject the United States and accept communism.

SHIFTING BORDERS The Berlin Wall divides the capital city of Germany, leading to concern in the West that World War III could begin in Europe.

GLOBALIZATION Peaceful coexistence attempts to reframe the Cold War and leads to cultural exchanges between the United States and the USSR.

Changes in the USSR

Stalin’s Death

On the evening of February 28, 1953, Josef Stalin and his four closest advisors shared a meal at Stalin’s country home just outside of Moscow. After Stalin went to bed, his bodyguard instructed the guards that Stalin was not to be disturbed under any circumstances. So the next morning, when Stalin did not come out of his room, the guards were afraid to enter. Finally, late in the evening of March 1, a guard went to check on Stalin and discovered that he had suffered a debilitating stroke that paralyzed the right side of his body. The guards immediately called the members of the **Politburo**, but they did not show up until the next day (March 2). The day after that (March 3), someone finally called for medical help, and Stalin died at 9:50 p.m. on March 5 from a cerebral hemorrhage.

Stalin’s death remains a historical debate. Many historians believe that, while it is certainly plausible that a seventy-four-year-old man would suffer a cerebral hemorrhage, it is not likely that Stalin’s occurred naturally. They believe that KGB Chief Lavrenty Beria gave Stalin warfarin (rat poison) to induce the hemorrhage, which is certainly supported by the uncharacteristic “do not disturb” order and the fact that the Politburo waited two days to call a doctor. And because it was widely known that Stalin was about to begin another round of political purges and Beria’s name was on the list, Beria certainly had motive. Other historians believe that Stalin died of completely natural causes, mostly because there would not have been opportunity to poison him. Stalin was incredibly suspicious and cautious—he always made others sample food and drinks that were presented to him. So why did the Politburo members wait to call a doctor? They said they just thought he was drunk and needed to sleep it off. Still, each member of the Politburo stood to gain political power from Stalin’s death.

Politburo

the supreme decision-making body of the Communist Party; a small but powerful group



Josef Stalin, lying in state.

Within the USSR, Stalin's death brought an end to his "cult of personality." The citizenry was split—people suffering in gulags around the country were quietly hopeful that things would change for the better, but many openly grieved. Stalin's body was embalmed and placed on display next to Lenin's in the Hall of Columns near Moscow's Red Square. In the first three days, several million people traveled to see him, waiting in line for hours to pass by the body. On the last night, they stampeded to get in, and it is estimated that several hundred people were crushed to death in the crowd.

From a Cold War perspective, Stalin's death opened the door for potential change. U.S. President Dwight D. Eisenhower had only been in office for two months and was committed to fighting the Cold War with what he called "strength and civility." He made a speech to the Soviet people, encouraging them to take advantage of this opportunity to embrace change in the USSR, and made it clear that the United States would not attack the USSR in its time of mourning. Then he waited to see who would emerge as the next Soviet premier and how that man would choose to fight the Cold War.

cult of personality

public adoration of a political leader who is viewed as infallible, created largely by his or her control over the mass media; occurs in totalitarian regimes

Nikita Khrushchev

Stalin's death led to a fierce power struggle between the top Communist Party officials for the position of premier of the USSR. From March 6, 1953, to February 8, 1955, Georgy Malenkov filled the position. Although he was allied with Lavrenty Beria, Malenkov agreed to Beria's execution as a traitor in December 1953. Nikita Khrushchev and Nikolai Bulganin worked together to oppose Malenkov's administration, and they used his relationship with Beria to force him to resign in February 1955. Bulganin took over as premier but then turned away from Khrushchev when the more conservative and powerful Vyacheslav Molotov offered to support him. The power struggle between Molotov and Khrushchev was about the future of the USSR—Molotov

Khrushchev's Thaw

policies designed to liberalize Soviet life politically, economically, culturally and socially

represented a continuation of Stalin's policies and methods, and Khrushchev sought major reform. On March 27, 1958, the battle ended as Khrushchev became the premier of the USSR and named Molotov the Soviet ambassador to Mongolia.

Although Khrushchev used Stalin-esque methods to achieve power, once he gained power he was focused on reforming the USSR. He truly believed in communism and that it would triumph over capitalism when executed properly. **Khrushchev's Thaw** was aimed at easing the rigid political and social climate of the USSR created by Stalin so that people could simply enjoy the benefits of communism. He switched economic production toward consumer goods to provide a higher standard of living for the people and built housing in cities, encouraging people to move around the entire satellite bloc. A Soviet popular culture was created, and people enjoyed art, music, fashion and sporting events. Censorship laws were relaxed, and Khrushchev personally encouraged the publication of Solzhenitsyn's *One Day in the Life of Ivan Denisovich*, detailing the horrors of life in a gulag. While they remained underground, a generation of dissident intellectuals began to write and speak without fear of execution. Khrushchev also released millions of political prisoners from the gulags.

ANALYSIS

Solzhenitsyn served in the Soviet army at the beginning of World War II but was arrested in 1945 when a letter he wrote to a friend in which he criticized Stalin was intercepted by censors. Solzhenitsyn was sentenced (without a trial) to eight years in prison, part of which was served in a gulag. While there, he wrote his experiences, which would later become *One Day in the Life of Ivan Denisovich*, on scraps of paper, memorized them, and then destroyed them. Upon his release from the gulag, he was exiled to Kazakhstan, where he began writing. Although Khrushchev allowed *One Day in the Life of Ivan Denisovich* to be published as part of his de-Stalinization campaign, Solzhenitsyn was again censored and harassed by the government after Khrushchev resigned.

The primary themes of *One Day in the Life of Ivan Denisovich* are the struggle for human dignity, the outrage of unjust punishment and the importance of faith, experiences that transcended the gulags and extended throughout Soviet life under Stalin's regime. Explain what Solzhenitsyn meant when he wrote: "freedom is found only when a [person] has been stripped of everything." Why do you think Khrushchev wanted this novel to be published?

Still, Khrushchev maintained absolute power in the Soviet government. Convinced that the USSR could "beat" the West in every way, he launched the Virgin Lands Campaign, an effort to increase agricultural production by using technology to grow new kinds of crops on unusable land in Kazakhstan and Siberia. Despite considerable evidence that it could not work, Khrushchev forced nearly a half million "volunteers" to the area, many of whom died from famine. And while censorship was relaxed, it certainly did not go away. Khrushchev was particularly opposed to organized religion and had many churches closed or destroyed.

De-Stalinization

Khrushchev's biggest political move domestically was the de-Stalinization of the USSR. In retrospect, he was not saying anything terribly earth shattering, and his sharp criticism of Stalin's brutality was certainly warranted when you consider the millions of Soviet citizens who died at the hands of their own government. But to many citizens and loyal Communist Party members, Stalin was a hero, and hearing the premier speak of him disparagingly was shocking.

In February 1956, when he was the leader of the Communist Party but not yet the premier of the USSR, Khrushchev delivered a speech to the Twentieth Congress of the Communist Party called "The Personality Cult and its Consequences." The speech became known as the "secret speech," because Khrushchev delivered it to a closed session of high-ranking party officials in the turbulent political climate that followed Stalin's death. His goal was to divide the top ranks of the

party, alienating Stalin's supporters and drawing support for himself. The speech, which went on for more than four hours, detailed the horrors of Stalin's regime against the party, focusing on the Great Purge that led to the arrests and executions of so many members of the Communist Party. In his speech, Khrushchev evoked Lenin's dreams for the USSR and emphasized how Stalin brutally destroyed them in creating his own cult of personality. He presented detailed evidence that the purges and gulags targeted Bolsheviks, the true followers of Lenin's ideology. In conclusion, Khrushchev specifically blamed his political rivals—Beria, Molotov and Malenkov—for planning and actively participating in Stalin's purges (but downplayed his own role).

As Khrushchev intended, the top echelons of the Communist Party were indeed divided. The split deepened when the text of the so-called “secret speech” was read at all Communist Party meetings throughout the USSR and eventually distributed throughout the satellite states and leaked to the Western press as well. The speech led to protests and riots, particularly in the Georgian Republic, where Stalin was born and raised. But Khrushchev's gamble paid off when he became premier in 1958 and initiated the policies of the “thaw,” winning the support of many Soviet citizens. In 1961, he had Stalin's body removed from public display in Lenin's mausoleum and buried nearby with a simple marker that read: “J. V. Stalin 1879–1953.” With the following decree, Khrushchev completed de-Stalinization:

*The further retention in the mausoleum of the sarcophagus with the bier of J. V. Stalin shall be recognized as inappropriate since the serious violations by Stalin of Lenin's precepts, abuse of power, mass repressions against honorable Soviet people, and other activities in the period of the personality cult make it impossible to leave the bier with his body in the mausoleum of V. I. Lenin (Khrushchev, quoted in Robert Payne, *The Rise and Fall of Stalin*, New York: Simon and Schuster, 1965, p. 682).*

 Read the Document *Nikita Khrushchev's Secret Speech* on mysearchlab.com

Peaceful Coexistence

The philosophy of Khrushchev's “thaw” extended into his foreign-policy decision making, ushering in a new phase of the Cold War. Whereas Stalin believed that the Cold War was a zero-sum game, Khrushchev believed that communism and democracy/capitalism could both exist in the world without requiring World War III to settle the ideological dispute. He based this philosophy on Lenin's principle of peaceful coexistence, again drawing the distinction between Stalin's violent approach to world affairs and the true principles of Soviet communism as established by Lenin's revolution. Khrushchev's use of peaceful coexistence to guide his foreign-policy decision making was largely a product of his faith in communism as the superior ideology. He believed that workers around the world would *choose* a communist way of life and that it was his responsibility as the leader of the communist world to help them in their revolutionary struggles to establish communist governments.

There was, of course, a very practical side to peaceful coexistence as well. Khrushchev wanted to avoid World War III and slow down the arms race. He recognized that a nuclear holocaust would destroy the world, and he could not be sure that the USSR was winning the arms race, so he really wanted to avoid direct conflict with the United States. He feared that aggressive and violent rhetoric like Stalin's would incite the United States to strike, particularly if President Eisenhower believed the United States was winning the arms race.

Khrushchev hoped that the concept of peaceful coexistence would alleviate the United States' fears of a Soviet attack and slow down the arms race. This would allow him to divert money away from defense spending and instead devote resources to fostering communism around the world, which was the ultimate goal of communist foreign policy. This meant increased spending on domestic industry to convince

...We shall never take up arms to force the ideas of communism upon anybody. We do not need to do that, for the ideas of communism express the vital interests of the popular masses. Our ideas, the ideas of communism have such great vitality that no weapon can destroy them, that not even the nuclear weapon can hold up the development of these progressive ideas. Our ideas will capture the minds of mankind. The attempts of the imperialist to arrest the spread of the ideas of communism by force of arms are doomed to failure...for forty years now ... the capitalists have been reiterating that...private ownership is omnipotent. We affirm that the ideas of communism are incomparably stronger, that these ideas will ultimately prevail. Therefore, we repeat again and again: let us compete, let us coexist peacefully...

—Khrushchev, speech to Albanian embassy, spring 1957

MAKE THE CONNECTION

How does “peaceful coexistence” fit in with Marxist theory? With Lenin’s view of the “struggle”? With Stalin’s execution of the Cold War?

people that communism provided for its citizens. He was also obligated to militarily support the satellite states, which were located in crucial geostrategic positions that buffered the USSR from Western aggression. And to support communist revolutions around the world, Khrushchev had to provide financial incentives for political leaders in Latin America, Asia and Africa. He preferred to finance “splashy” projects such as stadiums and buildings that would draw the attention of the international press, but these projects were very expensive.

Domestic Consequences

Because the goal of peaceful coexistence was to minimize the use of military force to spread communism and compete for peoples “minds” instead, Khrushchev had to make the USSR look better than the West. His domestic policies were focused on catching up with, and eventually overtaking, capitalist countries in terms of economic development, thereby proving that communism was superior. People would demand communist governments, and democracy/capitalism would fade away.

But ideology aside, a communist economy was not designed to generate excess profits. The goal was for every citizen to produce what he or she can, and the products of the process would be distributed equitably throughout the population. Everyone worked, and everyone shared in the profits generated by the entire community. No one paid taxes, because the government was not providing for the citizens; the citizens were providing for one another. In fact, a true communist society (according to Marx) would not even have a government—the state would wither away because it would be unnecessary when the people worked together to produce what they needed. This, of course, was not how the Soviet economy was designed. Everyone worked in state-owned enterprises, but the government then siphoned off the money it needed to run the country and fight the Cold War.

So the primary problem Khrushchev faced was how to feed the more than 214 million people in the USSR in 1960, provide them with as many consumer goods as in the West, and maintain the country’s infrastructure (things such as roads, buildings, dams and power); but he also had to pull enough money out of the economy to maintain an active military, keep up (at least) in the arms race, and provide financial assistance to spread communism around the world. To maintain superpower status and prove the superiority of communism, those last three foreign-policy goals absolutely had to be met. Unfortunately, meeting those goals did not leave enough money for domestic affairs. Under Khrushchev, the USSR developed a major food crisis, the black market took over the domestic economy for almost all consumer goods, and the infrastructure began to crumble.

Foreign Affairs

To Khrushchev, peaceful coexistence meant avoiding World War III, but it certainly did not mean abandoning superpower status. He was always very clear that he maintained absolute authority within the USSR, and he was a powerful player in world affairs. Although Khrushchev was not a tall man, he made a big impression on people—he was talkative, loud and spoke aggressively. His formal education was limited, but he was clever and certainly ambitious. And by the time he gained the top position in the USSR, he did not control his temper well. Khrushchev was angry at Stalin for subverting Lenin’s vision for the USSR and angry at the United States for its insistent criticism of communist ideology. Though he wanted to avoid World War III, Khrushchev had an unwavering faith in his ideology and would not compromise its success. Drawing on his Marxist teachings, in November 1956 he vehemently told Western diplomats: “Whether you like it or not, history is on our side. We will bury you!”

As part of peaceful coexistence, the United States and the USSR attempted to promote understanding between their citizens with a cultural exchange in 1959, although there were certainly heavy political undertones as well. The Soviets presented an exhibit in New York that depicted daily life in the USSR, and the United States took its American National Exhibit to



Khrushchev and Nixon in Moscow.

Moscow that July. Designed to show off America's superiority, the exhibit was basically a recreation of the "typical" American suburban home, featuring the latest appliances, luxury amenities, high fashion and recreational vehicles. As U.S. Vice President Richard Nixon gave Khrushchev a tour of the "home," Khrushchev commented: "You Americans expect that the Soviet people will be amazed. It is not so. We have all these things in our new flats." This sparked a debate between the men on the merits of capitalism versus communism that ended with Khrushchev threateningly pointing his finger in Nixon's face and challenging: "Who is giving the ultimatum?" Still, the so-called "Kitchen Debate" remained friendly, and Khrushchev even allowed Nixon to speak out against communism on Soviet national television before Nixon left the USSR in August.

 Read the Document *The Kitchen Debate* on mysearchlab.com

Khrushchev's trip to the United States did not go quite as well. He arrived on September 15, 1959, and was escorted around the country by President Eisenhower and a huge contingent of international media. At the top of Khrushchev's itinerary was Hollywood, California. Touring 20th Century Fox Studios, Khrushchev met his favorite movie star, John Wayne (who was an avid anticommunist) and had lunch with Frank Sinatra, Kirk Douglas, Gary Cooper and Marilyn Monroe. But Khrushchev was angered when other actors, including Ronald Reagan, refused to meet with him, and Khrushchev blamed the studio chief and President Eisenhower for the many protestors who followed him around Los Angeles. Khrushchev's largest public outburst came when he was told he could not visit Disneyland for security reasons, but he enjoyed visits to New York, San Francisco, Iowa and Pittsburgh during his two-week stay in the United States. Although Khrushchev and Eisenhower spent the last two days in high-level discussions at Camp David, no concrete agreements or policies regarding peaceful coexistence were made. The leaders of the superpowers agreed to maintain open lines of communication as they competed for worldwide political and economic dominance.

The open relationship between the United States and the USSR came to an end on May 1, 1960, when a U-2 spy plane from the United States was shot down by a Russian missile 850 miles east of Moscow flying at an altitude of about 68,000 feet. Although the United States denied it was a spy plane, the Soviets produced the captured pilot, Francis Gary Powers, and photographs and films he had taken of Soviet military installations and important industrial



Wreckage of Gary Powers' plane on display in the USSR.

Paris Summit

meeting between Eisenhower (United States), Khrushchev (USSR), Harold Macmillan (Great Britain) and Charles de Gaulle (France) to discuss nuclear disarmament, China, and the division of Berlin

targets. According to Powers's arrest records, the evidence the Soviets collected from the plane's wreckage and the pilot's testimony "left no doubt that it was a deliberate intrusion into the air space of the Soviet Union with hostile purposes." Eisenhower was forced to admit that he approved the mission, but he refused to apologize for invading Soviet airspace. Powers, a civilian, pleaded guilty to spying for the CIA and was sentenced to ten years in a Soviet military prison (although he was freed in February 1962 in exchange for the release of a Soviet spy, Rudolph Abel). The entire event occurred just as the **Paris Summit** was opening on May 14, 1960. In the days preceding the meeting, both Eisenhower and Khrushchev took increasingly rigid stances on the U-2 incident. Khrushchev, who refused to attend the private meetings and only spoke when the international media was present, used language such as "aggressive, treacherous and incompatible" to describe the United States and declared: "When the government of one of the great powers declares bluntly that its policy is intrusion into the territory of another great power with espionage and sabotage purposes...it is clear that the declaration of such a policy dooms the summit conference to complete failure in advance." He demanded that Eisenhower apologize and punish members of the U.S. government who planned, approved and executed the mission.

Evoking the memory of Pearl Harbor, Eisenhower responded that Khrushchev's "fetish of secrecy and concealment...is a major cause of international tension and uneasiness..." He upheld the United States' right to engage in espionage, calling it "a distasteful but vital necessity," and refused to apologize for protecting his citizens against the Soviet threat. This was not the response Khrushchev was looking for—he rescinded the invitation for Eisenhower to visit the USSR and refused to negotiate with the United States until another administration was in place. The summit was cancelled, and the open communication between the United States and the USSR came to an end.

The following September, Khrushchev traveled to the United Nations in New York City to celebrate the UN's fifteenth anniversary. Fearing for his safety after thousands of death threats, Khrushchev did not leave the city. Eisenhower also attended the event but steered clear of

Khrushchev, so the two never confronted one another directly. Throughout the meetings, Khrushchev was disruptive, pounding his desk and interrupting speakers in angry outbursts. He was displeased with UN actions around the world and demanded that UN Secretary Dag Hammarskjöld resign his position. Khrushchev gave a two and a half hour speech calling for decolonization and disarmament, accusing the West of preventing progress in those areas. He laid out his plan for the complete reorganization of the UN, which he felt should certainly not meet in the United States. Khrushchev's behavior throughout the week was aggressive and erratic, culminating in a now-infamous incident in which he allegedly pulled off his shoe and banged it on the table in a fit of rage as he called the head of the Philippine delegation "a jerk, a stooge and a lackey of imperialism."

Khrushchev's change in behavior in 1960 confirmed U.S. suspicions that de-Stalinization and peaceful coexistence were simply more Soviet rhetoric and that the Cold War was as potentially hot as ever. But why the change from open communication and competition to actions that would bring the world to the brink of nuclear war in 1962? Top-ranking Communist Party officials within the USSR did not approve of Khrushchev's approach to fighting the Cold War, as evidenced by an attempted coup against him in May 1957. They were concerned that he was too soft on democracy and capitalism, and Khrushchev had to demonstrate to them that he was not if he wanted to keep his position of power. Additionally, Mao's frustrations with Khrushchev over de-Stalinization led to the Sino-Soviet split in 1960, highlighting the divisions and power struggles within the communist world. Anxious to prove his absolute authority, Khrushchev seized on the U-2 incident to reassert an anti-American stance and silence internal challenges. In doing so, he also escalated the Cold War.

Challenges in the Satellite Bloc

The front line of the Cold War between East and West ran right through Europe. The Eastern Bloc countries, or satellite states (what Churchill called the Iron Curtain), were completely controlled by the USSR politically, socially and economically. They were pro-Soviet communist states expected to emulate Stalin's USSR in every respect: five-year plans, collectivization, industrialization, and frequent political purges. When Khrushchev's "thaw" and de-Stalinization reached these satellite states, some government leaders saw an opportunity to redefine communism for themselves, which was not exactly what Khrushchev had in mind.

Poland

Under the communist government of Boleslaw Beirut, life in Poland in the early 1950s followed Stalin's model very closely. But Khrushchev's "thaw" and Beirut's death in 1956 (under mysterious circumstances while attending the Twentieth Party Congress in Moscow) led to turmoil as pro-Stalinists tried to prevent the reformists, led by Wladyslaw Gomulka, from taking control of the Communist Party and the government.

Polish laborers had been dissatisfied for years about low wages and long workdays but never dared do much about it during Beirut's reign. As reforms began in Poland following Beirut's death—for example, 28,000 political prisoners were freed from the gulags—the laborers became more vocal about their concerns. On June 28, 1956, the



MAP 8.1 The Soviet Satellite Bloc

situation turned into an all-out protest as 100,000 workers and their families from all industries in the city of Poznan gathered in the town square. Things got out of hand quickly—demonstrators attacked the prison, police station and Communist Party headquarters, seizing weapons, as the Polish army fought to restore order with bombs and guns. It took two days, 10,000 troops and 400 tanks to end the revolt, which killed approximately eighty people, but the point was made, and the Polish government allowed workers to elect councils in the factories to negotiate reforms.

While Khrushchev talked about reforming communism, he feared losing control of the process. In October, the Politburo dispatched Russian troops to Warsaw, and Khrushchev traveled there himself to reassert Soviet authority over the government. The workers were prepared to battle the Russian army for their freedom, but Gomulka was able to convince Khrushchev that even a reformist Polish Communist Party would remain loyal to the Warsaw Pact. In late October, Gomulka demanded an end to the protest rallies and demonstrations. Once in power, he shut down the radical newspapers that had surfaced to support him months before, reasserted the illegality of labor strikes, and put an end to the workers' councils. Gomulka recognized that Khrushchev would not allow another independent leader (like Tito) in the satellite bloc, and fell back in line to retain his power.

Hungary

Throughout the early 1950s, Hungary was one of the most oppressive countries in Europe under the authoritarian leadership of Matyas Rakosi and his Security Police. As a consequence of Khrushchev's de-Stalinization program, Rakosi was removed from power in July 1956 and replaced by reformist Erno Gero. Intellectuals and students in Hungary began openly debating and discussing reform, developing a list of sixteen demands for reform of government policies. In solidarity for the reform movement happening in Poland at the same time, 200,000 student protesters gathered in Szeged and read their demands aloud. When Gero rejected them and called for an end to the demonstration, the students toppled a statue of Stalin and cut the communist coat of arms out of the national flag of Hungary. The demonstration turned into a revolution as the Secret Police attacked and the fighting became widespread.

On October 24, Soviet tanks and troops entered Budapest to put an end to the revolution, which only outraged Hungarians even more. Workers, police and even Hungarian soldiers joined the student revolutionaries to fight the Russians. Popular reformist leader Imre Nagy stepped forward to encourage the revolutionaries to stop fighting and allow negotiations to begin. Satisfied that Gero was out of power and the Russian military would leave, the violence ended while Nagy attempted to establish order, suspended the Secret Police, and laid out his plans to build a multiparty social democracy. Nagy appealed to the UN Security Council for assistance, but of course the USSR exercised its veto power to prevent it, and the United States was unwilling to risk World War III by intervening in a Warsaw Pact state. Hungary was on its own to develop a democratic government.

The Politburo was divided on its response—a few hard-liners wanted to invade immediately, but most assumed that the Communist Party would regain control of Hungary, as it had in the labor strikes in Poland. It was not until Hungary announced its neutrality in the Cold War and withdrew itself from the Warsaw Pact on November 1 that the Politburo realized the Hungarian Revolution was truly a revolution against communism itself. Losing an ally, particularly one along the buffer zone against the West, was absolutely unacceptable. The Soviet military launched an invasion of Budapest in the evening of November 3, 1956. After a week of violence, a Soviet-controlled government was reinstated in Hungary on November 10. By the end of the Hungarian Revolution, more than 2,500 Hungarians had died, and 13,000 more were wounded. More than 200,000 Hungarians became refugees, and 26,000 were put on trial by the new communist government (13,000 of whom were imprisoned). The Soviet military remained in Hungary for the duration of the Cold War.

Yugoslavia

Josip Broz Tito, a communist, was a World War II hero in Yugoslavia for his role in organizing the military to defeat the Axis powers. After the war, he was overwhelmingly elected prime minister and served as president from 1953–1980. Because Tito was a communist, the United States considered him Stalin's ally; but because he preferred to make his own leadership decisions, Stalin did not trust him. When establishing his government in Yugoslavia in 1948, Tito told Stalin: "We study and take as an example the Soviet system, but we are developing socialism in our country in somewhat different forms." In response, Stalin expelled Tito's Yugoslav Communist Party from the **Cominform**.

Tito was not what Stalin was looking for in a Cold War ally, and he sent several assassins to Yugoslavia in an attempt to solve his "Tito problem." They were never successful, and Stalin settled for a smear campaign throughout his satellite states—anyone suspected of practicing "Titoism" was sent to the gulag. Tito used this open split with Stalin to gain U.S. financial support through the Marshall Plan, but he refused to fall under the American sphere of influence, remaining neutral in the Cold War. When Khrushchev launched de-Stalinization, he assumed that it would bring Yugoslavia into the Soviet sphere of influence. The two men met several times, although initially Tito would not travel to Moscow and made Khrushchev visit him in Belgrade instead. Tito insisted on maintaining independence for Yugoslavia in all matters and criticized the Soviet invasion of Hungary in 1956. Khrushchev was unable to convince Tito to rejoin the communist bloc, and Tito remained persistently neutral throughout the remainder of the Cold War.

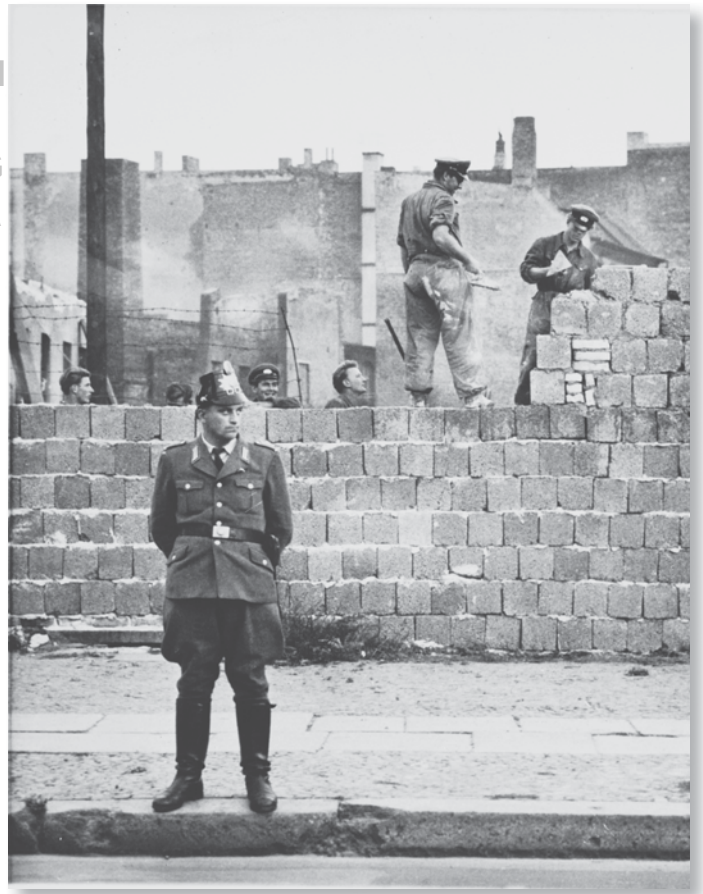
Cominform (Communist Information Bureau)
international organization to create and spread communist solidarity

brain drain
when skilled labor and/or intellectuals leave their country to seek more favorable political or economic conditions; results in primarily unskilled labor in the country

The Berlin Wall

East and West met in the divided city of Berlin, 155 miles inside the borders of the Soviet-controlled German Democratic Republic (GDR). This was where Khrushchev hoped to demonstrate the economic superiority of the Soviet model over capitalism in the U.S.-supported Federal Republic of Germany (FRG). Unfortunately, even with heavy subsidies from the USSR, the standard of living in the GDR steadily dropped lower than the FRG throughout the 1950s, leading to a "brain drain" from the GDR to the FRG through the open border in the city of Berlin. And by 1958, Khrushchev began to fear that the FRG, a member of NATO, was preparing to launch some sort of military intervention into the GDR. In hopes of securing even more financial and military support for his government, the communist leader of the GDR, Walter Ulbricht, convinced Khrushchev that something had to be done or the GDR would most surely succumb to the FRG from internal and/or external pressures. Particularly after the Sino-Soviet split of 1960, Khrushchev could not afford another "loss" on the Cold War scorecard, and diplomatic measures had failed to stop the United States from strengthening the FRG through rearmament. After the failure of the Paris Summit in 1960, Khrushchev attempted to negotiate with the new U.S. President, John F. Kennedy, but Kennedy too refused to compromise on Berlin.

By spring 1961, the refugee crisis from the GDR had become an international embarrassment, and the economic situation had worsened. In just one year (1960), an estimated



The Berlin Wall going up, 1961.

200,000 East Germans fled for the FRG. On August 1, 1961, Ulbricht and Khrushchev met to discuss putting “an iron ring around Berlin.” Two factors were crucial: (1) the East German people must be convinced that the action was to protect them from the FRG, and (2) there must be no warning before the border was sealed to prevent a further “brain drain.” That same week, another 15,000 people fled the GDR.

On the morning of August 13, 1961, Berliners awoke to a divided city. Overnight, East German and Soviet troops had closed crossing points and erected six-feet-high barbed-wire fences, cut off train service between East and West Berlin, and armed border guards with the “shoot to kill” command. Despite verbal protests from the West, the lack of a military response signaled to Khrushchev that he had won this battle. The wall continued to go up, eventually becoming a 103-mile stretch of concrete and barbed wire, twelve feet high on average, guarded by three hundred watch towers and loaded with booby traps and landmines. Khrushchev said it was necessary to protect the people of the GDR against espionage, economic disaster and potential military aggression, but the Berlin Wall did not just prevent Westerners from entering East Berlin. Anyone caught leaving East Germany was killed—almost two hundred of them in the twenty-eight years the wall was there.

 Watch the Video
Escaping the Berlin Wall
on mysearchlab.com



MAP 8.2 Cuba in Relation to U.S. Border

Though a very real physical border, the wall also became the symbol of the ideological divide between East and West as the Cold War began to heat up in the late 1960s. In June 1963, U.S. President Kennedy spoke to a crowd of 120,000 people in West Berlin, noting their crucial role on the front line of the Cold War and promising international support:

...the wall is the most obvious and vivid demonstration of the failures of the Communist system, for all the world to see...it is...an offense not only against history but an offense against humanity, separating families, dividing husbands and wives and brothers and sisters, and dividing a people who wish to be joined together...All free men, wherever they may live, are citizens of Berlin, and therefore, as a free man, I take pride in the words, 'Ich bin ein Berliner.'

The Soviet Sphere of Influence Reaches the Western Hemisphere

Ever since the United States freed Cuba from Spanish colonial status in 1898, the economy of the independent island nation was largely controlled by U.S. interests. By the 1920s, U.S. corporations owned two-thirds of all Cuban farmland (primarily sugar plantations), all of its large mines (containing iron ore and copper) and the entire tourist industry, thus reaping the profits from all of Cuba's export commodities. The Cuban people worked for Americans but owned nothing and so retained no profits to reinvest in their own economy or infrastructure. Why did the government of Cuba allow U.S. corporations to control the national economy in their best interests and to the detriment of the Cuban people? In exchange for allowing the U.S. control to happen, Cuban government officials became personally wealthy.

From the mid-1930s, decision making in the Cuban government was controlled largely by Fulgencio Batista serving in one official capacity or another. When he staged a coup and became president in 1952, Batista suspended civil rights, enacted censorship and used brutality to enforce his policies. Student rioting and political protests became commonplace and were always met with violence by the police. With Batista's help, U.S. corporations expanded their ownership of the export industries to include local transportation (highways, trains and the airport) and the power company. His most personally lucrative deal was with the American mafia, which



Fulgencio Batista (far right) and Richard Nixon (far left).

built many casinos and used Havana as an international drug port. But it was the Cold War, so a dictator who prevented left-wing political policies and who also met the interests of U.S. corporations enjoyed the full support of the U.S. government. Under Batista, Cuba became totally dependent on the United States—71 percent of Cuba's imports were from the United States, and 67 percent of its exports were sent to the United States. When Batista was reelected president of Cuba in 1955 in what was obviously a rigged election (he was the only candidate on the ballot), a group of Cuban nationalists had had enough.

The Cuban Revolution

In December 1956, brothers Fidel and Raul Castro and professional revolutionary Ernesto “Che” Guevara led a group of eighty-two nationalist revolutionaries in an unsuccessful coup attempt against the Batista regime. Most were captured within three days, but the Castro brothers, Guevara and eight others escaped into the Sierra Maestra Mountains, where they regrouped and were joined by more revolutionaries (mostly university students) during the next two years. In May 1958, Batista sent 10,000 troops into the Sierra Maestras to find the revolutionaries—by the end of the summer, the Cuban military had been defeated, and Castro's rebels were well armed. The rebels began fighting their way to Havana that fall, arriving in the capital on January 1, 1959. With the widespread anti-Batista movement splashed across U.S. newspapers and growing sympathy for the Cuban revolutionaries, Eisenhower realized that Batista's military could not hold on. In December 1958, he sent an ambassador to inform Batista that the United States would no longer support his regime, nor could he seek exile in the United States (even though Batista owned a home in Daytona Beach, Florida). With Castro's revolutionaries at the edge of Havana on New Year's Eve, Batista and 180 of his supporters fled to Spain with over \$300 million.

Though the Cuban Revolution technically had control of the Cuban government on January 1, 1959, Castro stopped in the towns and villages along the way to speak to the people, building

support for the revolution. When Castro entered Havana on January 8, he was escorted by hundreds of revolutionaries, what remained of the Cuban military, and hundreds of thousands of cheering citizens. To the Cuban people, Castro and his revolutionaries were heroes who freed them from Batista's brutality and who would solve the huge urban–rural disparities created by U.S. “colonialism.”

Fidel Castro, a lawyer, was a smart man who recognized that, to the people of Cuba, the ideological bantering of the Cold War was the least of their concerns. He promised not to rule by ideology: “Not Communism or Marxism is our idea. Our political philosophy is representative democracy and social justice in a well-planned economy.” So the Cuban people—rich and poor, urban and rural—were united in their support of Castro's revolution. He was careful to establish a government led by intellectuals rather than revolutionaries. He initially served simply as the leader of the Rebel Army, but he was certainly pulling the strings behind the scenes. As they gained political power, the revolutionaries began to disagree on exactly what the policies of their new government should be. Some clearly embraced communism while others were opposed to it. Unwilling to let the revolution fall apart from within, Castro gradually assumed central leadership and imprisoned or executed those against him.

In April, Castro visited the United States, hoping to meet with President Eisenhower to discuss financial aid to help Cuba's economy. Eisenhower's administration was undecided on how to respond to the Cuban Revolution—some wanted to offer Castro the same deal Batista had to keep him firmly within the U.S. sphere of influence, but others wanted to take a hard line against what they feared were communist elements in his regime. Eisenhower refused to meet with Castro, but Vice President Nixon did spend three hours talking with him. Nixon came to the

 Read the Document *Fidel Castro Defends the Revolution* on mysearchlab.com



The Castro Brothers and Che Guevara.

conclusion that Castro did not really have a good grasp on the realities of communism and the Cold War, and the United States refused aid to Cuba.

That spring, Castro's regime began returning Cuban land and resources to the Cuban people. The government nationalized the power and telephone companies. The May 1959 Agrarian Reform Act banned land ownership by foreigners—the government nationalized farms larger than 1,000 acres (all held by U.S. corporations) and titled the land to 200,000 Cuban peasants. U.S. corporate executives demanded that the Eisenhower administration do something, so the United States put trade restrictions on Cuban imports.

In this competitive Cold War environment, if the United States would not help Castro, the USSR would. In February 1960, Castro negotiated a trade agreement in which the USSR would purchase five million tons of sugar from Cuba over five years, and Cuba would receive oil, grain and money from the USSR. But when the Soviet crude oil arrived in Cuba in April, the U.S.-owned oil refineries (Texaco, Esso and Shell) refused to refine it. In Castro's mind, the United States had declared economic war on Cuba, so he nationalized the refineries. In response, Eisenhower expanded the trade restrictions, cutting off 80 percent of Cuba's total sugar exports. The USSR stepped in and agreed to buy the sugar, and Cuba and the USSR established formal diplomatic relations in May 1960. That June, Castro nationalized \$850 million in U.S. property, and he seized all U.S. banks in Cuba at the end of the summer. At the United Nations General Assembly in September 1960, Castro and Khrushchev were clearly allied. The Soviet sphere of influence extended into the West.

With Castro and Khrushchev allied and Cuba just ninety miles off the U.S. coast, Eisenhower had to choose his actions extremely carefully. He clearly needed Castro out of power, but how to accomplish it and keep U.S. involvement hidden? Eisenhower's \$13 million plan was called Operation Zapata. When approved in February 1960, the plan ignited a chain of events that came as close to World War III as the Cold War ever got.

The Bay of Pigs

When John F. Kennedy became president of the United States in 1961, he vowed to be a new kind of "Cold War warrior." He would be tough on communism, of course, but hoped to negotiate an end to ideological hostilities rather than risk World War III. While campaigning for office, Kennedy had blamed Eisenhower and Nixon (against whom he was running in the 1960 election) for "neglecting" Castro and allowing him to "slip behind the Iron Curtain." Yet immediately after taking office, when presented with the Eisenhower administration's plan to oust Castro, Kennedy agreed to it.

In preparation for Operation Zapata, CIA agents had been secretly training Cuban **exiles** at several military facilities throughout the southeast United States and a few Latin American countries to prepare them to invade their homeland on the southeast coast of Cuba at Playa Giron. They would travel to Havana, picking up supporters along the way, overthrow Castro's regime and establish a U.S.-friendly provisional government in Cuba. From the planning of the invasion right through its execution, the CIA made some serious miscalculations that doomed the operation's success.



Castro and Khrushchev at the UN.

 Read the Document John F. Kennedy and Cuba on mysearchlab.com

exile
a citizen involuntarily living outside of his or her country

The Cuban government knew the attack was coming, through its contacts in Miami and with KGB agents, so it prepared a defense of the coastline. The success of the plan also relied heavily on the 1,300 invaders picking up the support of anti-Castro revolutionaries in Cuba, but most of them had been arrested or executed by April 17, 1961, when the invasion began. And particularly in the countryside, most Cuban people supported Castro. Finally, to combat the Soviet-supplied Cuban military, the invaders would need significant help from the U.S. military, and President Kennedy was simply unwilling to commit that level of support.

At 6:00 a.m. on April 15, 1961, eight U.S. bombers painted to look like Cuban aircraft took off from Nicaragua and attacked three Cuban airfields in an attempt to destroy the planes while on the tarmac, but they caused only minimal damage. Immediately after the attack, the Cuban foreign minister went to the UN and accused the United States of launching the attacks, which of course the United States denied. But, worried that the UN might look into it, Kennedy canceled all remaining air attacks on Cuba, leaving the Cuban air force intact. Castro arrested hundreds of thousands of civilians that he did not quite trust on April 15 and 16. On April 17, the CIA-trained force of 1,300 exiles landed on Playa Giron, about 125 miles south of Havana, where they and the supply ships were immediately attacked by the Cuban air force. Without American air support or supplies, the invasion force was quickly outnumbered and outmaneuvered—all of them captured or dead within the week.

The failed Bay of Pigs invasion was a disaster for the Kennedy administration. The United States looked weak militarily, which was a dangerous perception in the middle of the Cold War. And Kennedy had been obviously lying in a press conference on April 12 when he clearly stated: “First, I want to say that there will not be, under any conditions, an intervention in Cuba by the United States Armed Forces.” Kennedy’s political opponents in the United States exploited his weakness as commander in chief and his ability to carry out tough choices to fight the communist presence in the western hemisphere. The invasion changed things in Cuba, too. People who opposed Castro were in prison or dead, leaving only ardent Castro supporters among the population. Che Guevara sent a note to Kennedy thanking him for making the revolution stronger than ever. But perhaps

MAKE THE CONNECTION

- Did Castro ally with the USSR for political, financial or national security reasons?
- Did Eisenhower push Cuba behind the Iron Curtain, as Kennedy alleged?
- Did Kennedy escalate the Cold War through his reactions to Castro?



The Kennedys Greet the Cuban Invasion Brigade Members, December 1962.

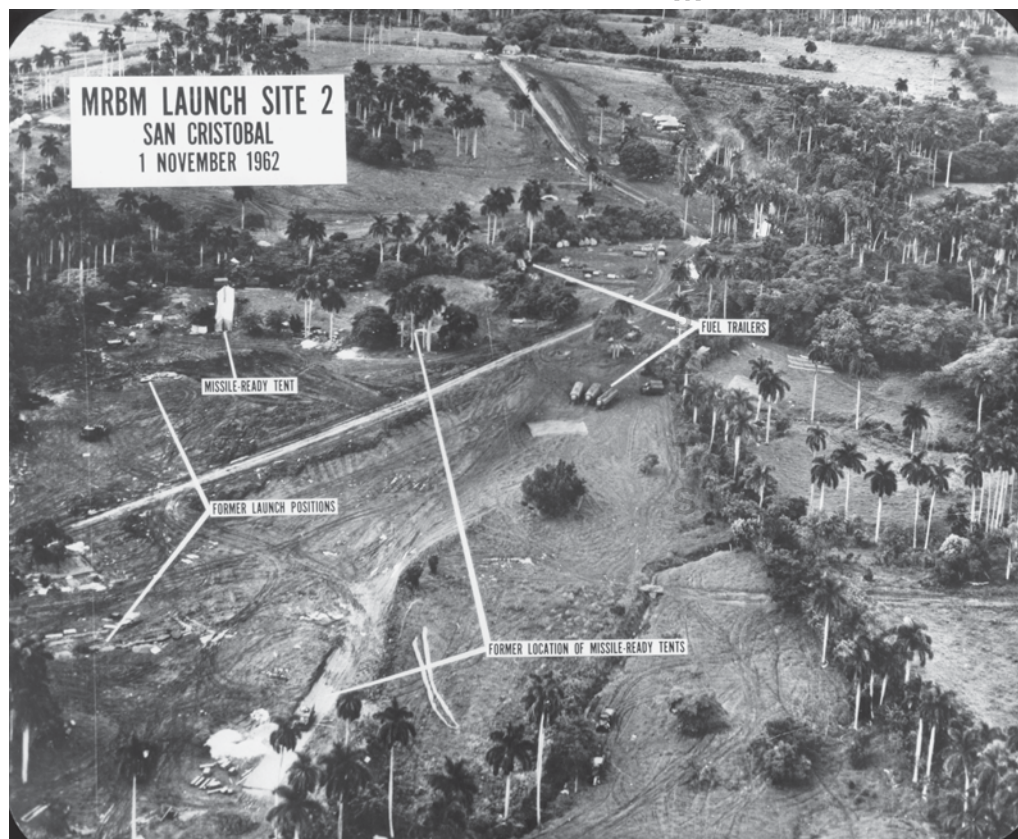
most dangerous in terms of the larger Cold War, the invasion made Castro realize that the United States would indeed use military force to remove him from power, and he needed help to prevent that from happening.

Operation Mongoose

Kennedy was even more determined to remove Castro from power, but he did not want to be embarrassed again, so he relied heavily on the CIA to handle the problem covertly. In January 1962, Kennedy told his closest advisors that getting rid of Castro was “the top priority of the U.S. government—all else is secondary—no time, money, effort, or manpower is to be spared.” The CIA decided that Castro had too much support to be overthrown from within, so it launched Operation Mongoose, a series of small-scale secret sabotage and assassination attempts planned by CIA operative General Edward Lansdale. The sabotage missions went after strategic communication and transportation targets in an attempt to incite a popular uprising against Castro. Far more bizarre were the attempts to get rid of Castro directly. Fabian Escalante, head of the Cuban secret service throughout Castro’s regime, alleges that there were 638 assassination attempts made on Fidel Castro’s life. Because it was imperative that U.S. government involvement be hidden, the creative attempts ranged from exploding cigars and seashells to pen syringes and bacteria-laced coffee.

The Cuban Missile Crisis

With the Bay of Pigs invasion and the assassination attempts, the United States made it clear that it intended to oust Castro, so he turned to Moscow for military support. Khrushchev was delighted to help, deploying Soviet military support and nuclear missiles to Cuba in the summer of



Aerial Photograph of Medium Range Ballistic Missile Launch Site Two at San Cristobal, November 1962.

 Watch the Video
President John F. Kennedy
Addresses the Nation on
mysearchlab.com

naval blockade

the use of ships at sea to surround and cut off a place from the movement of goods or people, usually to compel a surrender or achieve a political goal

1962. Because Cuba lies well south of the DEW line, a nuclear attack launched from Cuba would not be detected until the missiles were in U.S. airspace. For the USSR, this was certainly an edge in the arms race, although military experts in Kennedy's administration were not too concerned that the Soviets would actually use the missiles. They were far more worried about the impression of power the situation created—that Khrushchev could brazenly expand the Soviet sphere of influence to the United States' backyard and Kennedy could not do a thing about it. Particularly because of the Bay of Pigs fiasco, it was vital that Kennedy demonstrate his willingness and ability to contain communism.

The United States first had evidence that the USSR was sending military aid to Cuba in the summer of 1962. By mid-October, U-2 spy planes flying over Cuba brought back pictures of nine ballistic missile sites under construction. On October 16, Kennedy called together the Executive Committee of the National Security Council (EXCOMM) to figure out how to deal with a Soviet nuclear threat ninety miles offshore. Council members discussed several options, including doing nothing at all or using diplomacy to negotiate with Khrushchev. They considered surgical strikes on the missile sites, but that was a dangerous gamble because they were not sure whether the missiles were operational or if they knew the locations of all the sites. The Joint Chiefs of Staff called for a full-scale invasion of Cuba, but Kennedy resisted because he feared one of two things would happen: either the Soviets would let the United States seize Cuba and then invade West Berlin in retaliation; or there would be Soviet troops on the ground in Cuba, which would ignite World War III.

By October 19, EXCOMM was fairly confident that four of the missile sites were operational—the situation was getting worse, and something had to be done. Kennedy decided to put a quarantine around Cuba (in international waters) that would require suspicious ships heading for Cuba to be stopped and searched by the U.S. navy. This was clever language because, under international law, a **naval blockade** is considered an act of war. Kennedy argued that this was not an actual blockade because of its limited nature—the United States would only stop ships it suspected carried offensive weapons to be used against them. On October 22, 1962, President Kennedy announced to the American people that the Soviets had built tactical missile sites in Cuba and that the United States (with full support from the OAS) would erect a quarantine around the island nation. He demanded that the USSR remove its missiles and bombers from Cuba and explicitly warned Khrushchev not to take retaliatory action against West Berlin. Then the world waited to see what Khrushchev would do.

For thirteen days, the world held its collective breath as the United States and the USSR appeared to be moving toward direct conflict. U.S. forces, including bombers with nuclear weapons, were put on alert. In Cuba, work on arming the missile sites continued around the clock. On October 24, two Soviet ships approaching Cuba stopped just short of the quarantine and stayed there, in a standoff with the U.S. navy, while Soviet oil tankers and merchant vessels steamed right through. Both Kennedy and Khrushchev continued to issue public statements with strong language and threats, but behind the scenes, aides to both men worked diligently to negotiate a peaceful end to the potential crisis. On October 26, with tensions increasing, Kennedy received an offer from Khrushchev. The USSR would withdraw its missiles from Cuba under two conditions: (1) the United States must never invade or attack Cuba; and (2) the United States must remove all of its missiles in Turkey aimed at the USSR.

The fact that the United States had missiles on the border of the USSR was supposed to be top secret. The missiles were old and were slated for decommission anyway, but their presence helped justify Khrushchev's actions in Cuba and made Kennedy's public outrage at the USSR seem a bit hypocritical. Kennedy was anxious to end the ordeal peacefully, but he certainly could not admit to having missiles in Turkey. As EXCOMM deliberated over its response, a U-2 spy plane was shot down over Cuba on October 27. EXCOMM assumed the Soviets were initiating a military "solution" to the crisis and pushed Kennedy to order a U.S. military response. Kennedy hesitated—he wanted to be sure that it was

ANALYSIS

Why is the Cuban Missile Crisis considered the closest the Cold War came to getting "hot"? Consider the map on the right, as well as Khrushchev's and Kennedy's personal attributes, in your explanation.



Cuban Missile Crisis: U.S. reconnaissance photo of Soviet missile site at Mariel Naval Port, Cuba, November 8, 1962.

Khrushchev's decision to shoot down the plane rather than Castro's. In last-minute negotiations, Khrushchev (who had not ordered the attack) and Kennedy were able to strike a deal that prevented further military escalation: Soviet missiles would be removed from Cuba in return for the *unpublicized* removal of missiles from Turkey. And the United States agreed to leave Castro alone.

Castro was angry about the entire course of events. Although Khrushchev had placed forty-two nuclear weapons in Cuba, he never entrusted Castro with control over any of them. Nor did he consult Castro at all during the thirteen days of negotiations. Khrushchev made it clear to Castro that he and his country were simply pawns in the larger game of the Cold War. And from that perspective, the Cuban Missile Crisis revealed just how dangerous that game had become. EXCOMM had significantly underestimated Soviet military capabilities in Cuba and overestimated Khrushchev's desire for direct conflict with the United States. Furthermore, the Cuban Missile Crisis made it apparent to everyone that the potential nuclear annihilation of the world rested in the temperaments of a few men, their interpretations of one another's actions, and flawed and incomplete intelligence gathering. Both Kennedy and Khrushchev realized how

close they had come to a nuclear exchange, and the pair began working toward agreements such as the 1963 Test Ban Treaty and the 1968 Non-Proliferation Treaty in an attempt to limit the potential damage of nuclear weapons research and testing. In this so-called Cold War, a single miscalculation or misinterpretation could be catastrophic.

Conclusions

Khrushchev viewed the West as a rival to be defeated rather than an evil entity to be destroyed. While he certainly engaged in endeavors to expand communism and denounce democracy and capitalism, he believed that communism would naturally defeat the West because the people would prefer it. This peaceful coexistence approach changed the nature of the Cold War. The cohesion of the communist ideology began to fall apart—first with the revolutions in the satellite states that believed they could craft their own versions of communism, then with the outright Sino-Soviet split in 1960 that opened the door for a relationship between the United States and the PRC. But Castro's popular revolution in Cuba, and both the U.S. and Soviet reactions to it, reminded everyone that the number-one priority for each of the superpowers was to expand its sphere of influence. And the Cuban Missile Crisis, perhaps the hottest period of the Cold War, demonstrated that each side would pay *almost* any cost to win.

WORKING WITH THE THEMES

THE EFFECTS OF TECHNOLOGY

What was Khrushchev trying to prove in the "Kitchen Debate"? How did the U-2 spy plane incident affect intelligence gathering? Why were Soviet nuclear missiles a bigger threat to the United States when placed in Cuba?

CHANGING IDENTITIES

What did Khrushchev hope to gain with "de-Stalinization"? Did he succeed? What effect did it have on nationalism in the satellite states? Why were the Cuban people willing to follow Castro, even into communism?

SHIFTING BORDERS

What were the short- and long-term consequences of the Berlin Wall? Why did the United States believe that World War III would begin in Berlin?

GLOBALIZATION

Why did Khrushchev support "peaceful coexistence"? Did it change the Cold War as he hoped? How might the U.S. embargo and quarantine of Cuba affect its image across Latin America?

Further Reading

TO FIND OUT MORE

Stalin's Death. 1953. Available online at
<http://stalin.narod.ru/>

Senate Chancellery Berlin: Berliner Mauer, 1961–1989. Available online at
<http://www.berlin.de/mauer/index.en.html>

MATRIX, the Center for Humane Arts, Letters and Social Sciences Online:
 Seventeen Moments in Soviet History—1954, 1956, 1961. Available online at
<http://www.soviethistory.org/>

John F. Kennedy Presidential Library and Museum: The World on the Brink. Available online at
<http://microsites.jfklibrary.org/cmc/>

GO TO THE SOURCE

- The Current Digest of the Soviet Press: Government Announcement. Available online at <http://chnm.gmu.edu/worldhistorysources/sources/stalinsdeath.html>
- Alexander Solzhenitsyn: *One Day in the Life of Ivan Denisovich* (1962)
- Nikita S. Khrushchev: On Peaceful Coexistence (Foreign Affairs, October 1959)
- Latin American Network Information Center/University of Texas at Austin: Castro Speech Database. Available online at <http://lanic.utexas.edu/la/cb/cuba/castro.html>
- National Security Archive/Peter Kornbluh (ed.): Bay of Pigs Declassified: The Secret CIA Report on the Invasion of Cuba (1998)
- National Security Archive/Laurence Chang and Peter Kornbluh (eds.): The Cuban Missile Crisis, 1962 (1998)
- National Security Archive/Vladislav M. Zubok and Constantine Pleshakov (eds.): Inside the Kremlin's Cold War—From Stalin to Khrushchev (1996)

MySearchLab Connections

 Read the Document on mysearchlab.com

- 8.1 *Nikita Khrushchev's Secret Speech*. In 1956, Khrushchev delivered a speech to the Communist Party of the Soviet Union in which he denounced Stalin's crimes against the Soviet people and the 'cult of personality' surrounding Stalin.
- 8.2 *The Kitchen Debate*. In July 1959, U.S. Vice President Richard Nixon attended the opening of an exhibition in Moscow, hosted by Soviet Premier Nikita Khrushchev. The exhibition showcased the latest cultural and technological advances from the U.S. and Soviet Union. Shadowed by the press from both nations, Khrushchev and Nixon engaged in a series of staged conversations, one of which took place in a model U.S. home.
- 8.3 *Fidel Castro Defends the Revolution*. In July 1953, Fidel Castro's first attempt to overthrow Cuban dictator Fulgencio Batista was a failure. He was put on trial where he delivered his "History Will Absolve Me" speech that explained his vision for a post-Revolution Cuba.
- 8.4 *John F. Kennedy and Cuba*. U.S. President Kennedy took a hard line on Communism during his campaign in 1960. After his election, he authorized the disastrous Bay of Pigs invasion of Cuba with the hopes of overthrowing the island's communist dictatorship under Castro.

 Watch the Video on mysearchlab.com

- 8.1 *Escaping the Berlin Wall*
- 8.2 *President John F. Kennedy Addresses the Nation*

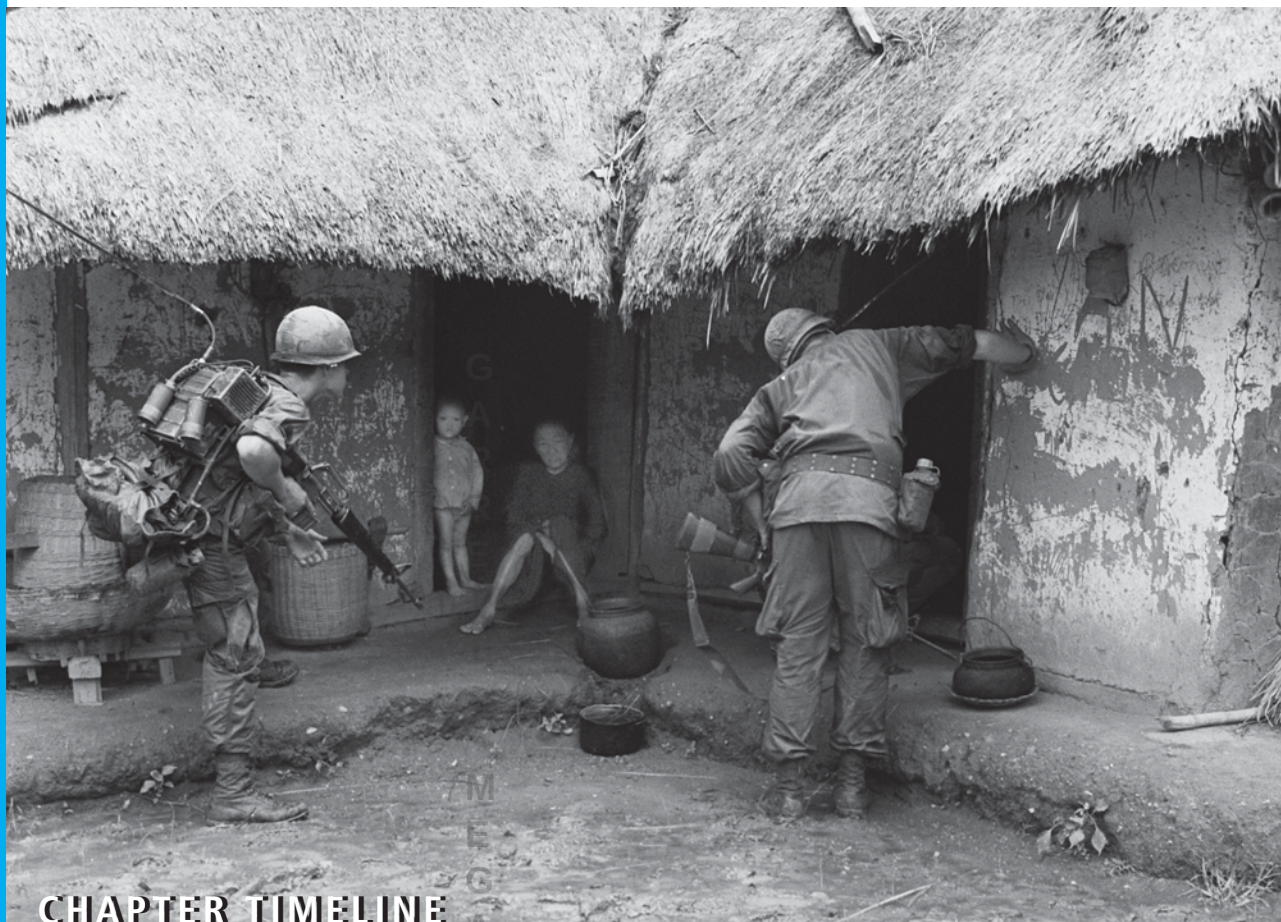
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The Problems of Decolonization

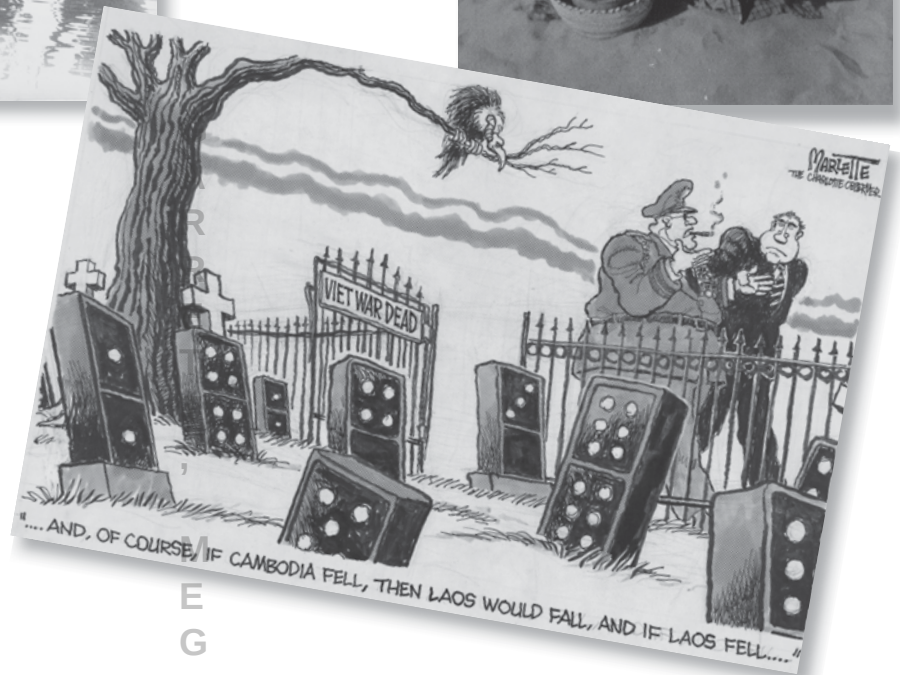
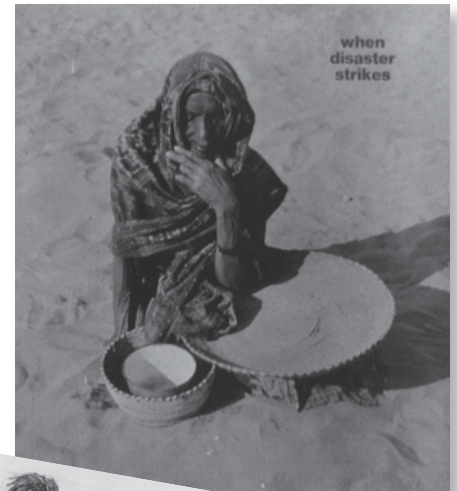
CHAPTER OUTLINE

- The Forces behind Decolonization
- Africa
- Southeast Asia
- The Non-Aligned Movement



CHAPTER TIMELINE

1954	1956	1960	1961	1963
France loses Vietnam at Dien Bien Phu	Reunification elections in Vietnam canceled	Non-Aligned Movement forms	United States and USSR develop ABMs	Diem is assassinated
FLN launches war in Algeria	Civil war erupts in Vietnam	Sino-Soviet split deepens	Bay of Pigs invasion fails	Kennedy is assassinated
Geneva Conference divides Vietnam		Congo wins independence; Lumumba is killed	Berlin Wall is built	Organization of African Unity is created
1975	1977			
Operation Frequent Wind removes last U.S. personnel from Vietnam	Ogaden War in Africa shakes up the Cold War			
Vietnam is reunited under a communist regime				



Photos from left to right: U.S. Troops in Vietnam;
Viet Cong guerrillas, 1966; Domino theory cartoon;
Famine in Africa.

1964

PRC becomes a nuclear power
Gulf of Tonkin incident takes place and Congressional Resolution passes

1965

The first U.S. ground troops arrive in Vietnam

1968

Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) is signed
Nixon is elected U.S. president
Tet Offensive, Battle of Khe Sanh, and My Lai Massacre stun the United States

1973

Treaty officially ends the conflict in Vietnam

1974

Haile Selassie is overthrown by Marxists in Ethiopia
Nixon resigns as U.S. president

The pressure on imperial powers to decolonize, which Woodrow Wilson first applied at the Paris Peace Conference of 1919, continued to grow as the century pressed on. In the years following World War II, the combination of internal (nationalist) and external (UN) demands for independence proved too powerful for most colonizers to resist, although the process of decolonization

WORKING WITH THE THEMES

THE EFFECTS OF TECHNOLOGY Technological superiority is no match for old-fashioned guerilla warfare in Vietnam, the most bloody proxy battle of the Cold War.

CHANGING IDENTITIES The deep internal divisions forged by colonial policies cannot be easily overcome, even with UN support. Decolonization becomes a long and bloody process across Asia and Africa.

SHIFTING BORDERS As decolonization proceeds, new countries are pulled into the Cold War spheres of influence. Vietnam is divided in half to prevent conflict between superpowers.

GLOBALIZATION The “domino theory” leads the superpowers to directly intervene in Asia. The Non-Aligned Movement attempts to restructure the international arena during the Cold War.

would be long and difficult, exacerbated by the Cold War. Former colonies provided the most fertile ground for proxy battles because their leaders were particularly susceptible to competing ideologies (after years of having their national identities defined for them) and in desperate need of money to establish their governments and build infrastructure for their nations. From 1945 to 1960, three dozen independent states were created in Asia and Africa out of former colonies, in part because the Charter of the United Nations made self-determination an international priority. By the end of the Cold War, eighty colonies had earned their freedom but not necessarily their independence. The process of decolonization in the competitive Cold War environment was fraught with violence, and it left a legacy of long-term political, economic and social devastation.

The Forces behind Decolonization

The shape the Cold War took early on was as much a consequence of the post-World War II structure of the world as it was competing ideologies or the arms race. The reality was that two countries emerged from the first half of the twentieth century with relatively equally matched military strength and stable political leadership (albeit through very different methods). The world was bipolar—there were two dominant countries competing to add all the other countries of the world to their spheres of influence.

Patterns of Decolonization

After World War II, the former powerhouses of Europe—the vast British Empire and the technologically advanced Germany—and the potent Japanese Meiji regime were gone. Japan was completely reconfigured to meet U.S. strategic interests, Germany was physically divided in two with a wall down the middle of its capital city, and Great Britain and France were reliant on the United States for reconstruction, trade and military protection. Despite their desire to maintain the benefits derived from their colonies, the countries could no longer afford to administer them. There was enormous financial pressure, particularly on those countries that received U.S. aid through the Marshall Plan, to divest from the colonies and focus on rebuilding themselves. There was also enormous pressure from within the colonies as nationalist movements grew increasingly vocal and violent. The democratic values espoused in the UN Charter simply did not extend to them as colonies, and they demanded independence.

The British and French took very different approaches to the decolonization process. Whereas the fairly stable government of Great Britain preferred to negotiate reforms that gradually led toward independence (India and Ireland), the fragile French Fourth Republic, with its many ideologically driven political parties, refused to even consider losing the territory, resources and pride that its colonies provided. As a result, nationalist movements in French

colonies often led to drawn-out, violent civil wars (Algeria and the Congo). And the territories where the colonial government had been defeated (either in World War II or by an internal revolution) suffered an entirely different fate at the hands of the United Nations in the Cold War world—they were divided into separate entities that better reflected the political desires of the superpowers than the nationalist realities of the territories (Korea and Vietnam).

Decolonization unfolded in the latter half of the twentieth century in many different ways but never in isolation from the nations within the region or the larger global context. The process was driven by multiple layers of influences, all interacting with one another to achieve their interests: grassroots nationalists, religious and ideological extremists, power-hungry leaders, transnational corporations, and international organizations.

The Role of the United Nations

When the United Nations was established in 1945, about one-third of the world's population lived under the direct rule of a colonial power. This ran counter to the democratic ideals espoused in the UN Charter. As Article II of the charter states: "The Organization is based on the principle of the sovereign equality of all its Members." So important was this concept of sovereign equality that Chapters XI, XII and XIII (Articles 73–91) of the charter deal specifically with the process of helping "non-self-governing territories" evolve into independent, democratic nation-states.

To assist in the process, the United Nations established an international trusteeship system, overseen by one of the main organs of the United Nations, the Trusteeship Council. For a former colony to qualify for the trusteeship system and aid from the United Nations, it had to be a territory that was never released from its League of Nations mandate, a colony of an enemy state from World War II, or a territory that was voluntarily placed in the system by its colonizer. The system sounded wonderful—the Trusteeship Council would help former colonies develop self-government based on their own cultures. But the Trusteeship Council was made up of the five permanent members of the Security Council—the United States, the USSR, China (under Chiang Kai-Shek), Great Britain and France. As a consequence, decisions were frequently made in the best interests of the superpowers and geostrategic positioning rather than the former colonies (for example, Korea).

By 1960, UN membership had doubled, and two-thirds of the new states were former colonies that struggled through the often-violent process of decolonization. In their experience, decolonization was taking too long and was not being administered in the best interests of the colonized peoples. Their presence in the United Nations shifted the power structure of the General Assembly, where a dedication to sovereign equality means each country's vote counts the same. In December 1960, the UN General Assembly passed Resolution 1514 (XV), the *Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and People*, which proclaimed that all people have a right to self-determination (as opposed to it simply being a principle that ought to apply) and that colonialism should be brought to a "speedy and unconditional end." The declaration stressed that when a newly independent country was created, its structure had to be determined by the freely expressed wishes of its people. Anything else was a fundamental violation of human rights. In 1961, the General Assembly formed a special committee on decolonization with expanded membership (twenty-four), including many former colonies.

MAKE THE CONNECTION

- What effect did decolonization have on the structures and processes of the United Nations?
- What effect did decolonization have on decision making and power within the United Nations?

The Cold War Effect

While the process of decolonization was different for every colony depending on many factors—who colonized it, its natural resources, geostrategic positioning, and the degree of internal ethnic and/or religious unity—it almost never happened peacefully. In some countries, the colonizer refused to give up control, utilizing military and/or economic power to maintain supremacy. In others, the colonizer left peacefully, but there were internal disagreements about

...If Indochina falls, Thailand is put in an almost impossible position. The same is true of Malaya with its rubber and tin. The same is true of Indonesia. If this whole part of South East Asia goes under Communist domination or Communist influence, Japan, who trades and must trade with this area in order to exist must inevitably be oriented towards the Communist regime.

—Richard Nixon, December 1953

who should rule. Add to that the financial and military intervention of the world's superpowers, and the result was usually violent. A few newly independent states were able to establish stable governments and economies, but most suffered from years of civil war under a string of dictatorships, many of them financially supported by either the USSR or the United States.

The dilemma for the United States was particularly sticky because, by definition, democracy means allowing people to choose their own governments. But what if the United States freed a country from colonial status and the USSR moved in and fostered a communist revolution or direct takeover? Or worse yet, what if the people had the right to vote and they did not vote for democracy? And ideology aside, the natural resources and geostrategic position of many of the colonies were too important to risk letting them fall under enemy control.

That is why they were colonized in the first place, and just because the war was now a “cold” one did not make those economic resources any less valuable to the West. Because the bipolar Cold War competition meant that a country could be *either* in the Soviet sphere of influence *or* in the American sphere of influence, losing access to a territory meant it would probably end up with the enemy, taking its resources and goods with it.

Despite the rhetoric of self-determination and democracy coming out of the United Nations, it was vital to both superpowers that they maintain economic, military and ideological control over every bit of territory they could. And an infant country struggling to establish stability was the ideal place to launch a battle by proxy.

Africa

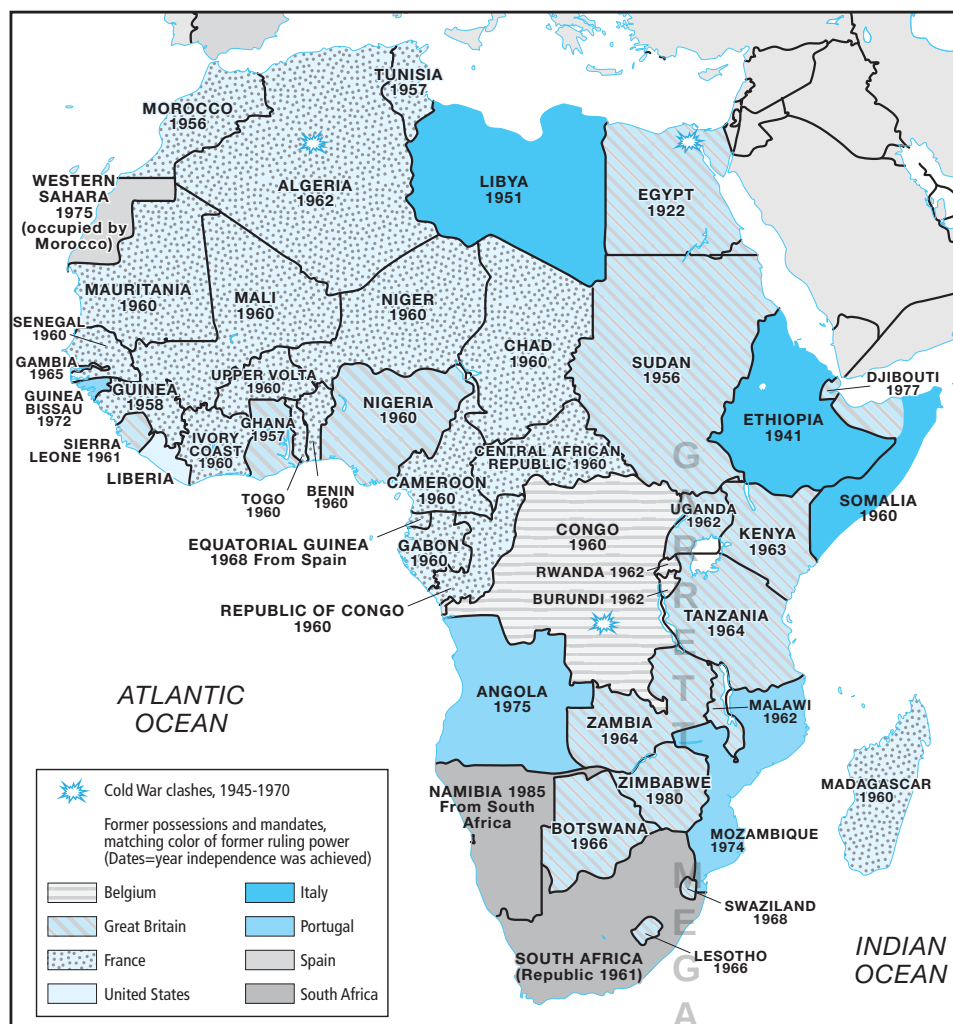
The legacy of colonization is most markedly seen in Africa. By 1965, most of the colonizers were gone, but it would take until 1980 for all of the former colonies to pull themselves together enough to be recognized as independent states (by 1975 there were forty-five independent states, and by 1980 there were fifty-one). What happened during those years—the process of becoming independent states—as well as where they stand today is all a direct result of colonization.

As colonists, the African people were discriminated against, exploited and purposely uneducated; and the great majority of them were kept out of participating in government in any meaningful way. But when the colonizers needed help during the two world wars, they relied heavily on their colonies for troops and raw materials. After the Great War when Wilson began talking about self-determination, many colonists felt that they had earned respect and the right to sovereign equality. European resistance to granting them independence was certainly based on the economic losses they would incur in doing so, but there were also more practical problems. The goal for the colonizers was to gain tangible material and economic benefits from their colonies, not to teach the Africans how to develop stable democratic governments or coordinate economic production. Political boundaries were not drawn according to ethnicity, which made it difficult to establish cohesive nations. Just as the colonization of Africa was based on the economic interests of Europe in the late 1800s, so too was the urgency of decolonization in the 1950s and '60s.

Under pressure from the United Nations as WWII ended, Great Britain started considering how to transition its African colonies to independence. In fact, Roosevelt had included a clause in the Atlantic Charter requiring them to do so. France, Belgium and Portugal were less amenable to UN demands and engaged in violent wars to defeat nationalist revolutions in the colonies. What happened in Algeria and the Congo provide excellent examples of the struggles many African nations faced.

Algeria

The French colonization of Algeria in the 1800s was a long and messy affair, and many Europeans settled there to help defeat the indigenous Muslim Arab population. As they moved in, they dislocated the native population from the productive farmland and claimed



MAP 9.1 The Decolonization of Africa

Algeria as an integral part of France. The colonial government granted all people of European descent in Algeria and the native Sephardi Jews full French citizenship, but it did not extend legal or political rights to the 9 million Muslim Algerians who represented the majority of the population.

In 1954, the same year the French lost control of Vietnam, a Muslim extremist group called the *Front de Libération Nationale* (FLN) in Algeria launched its war for independence. After four years of costly and brutal guerilla warfare, the French government was in crisis and facing a credible military threat from Algeria. France was on the verge of civil war; and to prevent it, newly elected President Charles de Gaulle assured the French settlers in Algeria they would remain part of France while also promising the FLN independence. As the violence raged on, the settlers realized that de Gaulle was likely going to grant the FLN independence in order to save France from war. An extremist settler organization developed and began attacks on Paris (including at least thirty assassination attempts on de Gaulle). With the violence escalating, de Gaulle negotiated an agreement with the FLN that granted Algeria independence in July 1962. More than 1 million French Algerian settlers and Algerian Muslims serving in the French army fled to France, but an estimated 50,000 to 150,000 others were killed by the new FLN-led authoritarian government.



Algeria, August 1955.

Congo

King Leopold II of Belgium personally owned the Congo Free State as a corporate entity from 1878 to 1908, ruthlessly exploiting the Congolese people in order to dominate the rubber and ivory trade. He maintained control through his *Force Publique*, Belgian soldiers and mercenaries from other European countries. Whenever local chiefs tried to organize tribal resistance to Leopold's forced labor policies, the *Force Publique* responded with brutal retaliation. In the early 1900s, European and U.S. media exposed Leopold's treatment of the Congolese, and the Belgian government assumed control of the Congo in 1908. Much of the brutality ended under Belgian control, but forced labor continued as the Belgian Congo became one of the world's leading copper producers in the early twentieth century.

When Belgium was occupied by the Nazis in 1940, the Congo remained loyal to the exiled Belgian government and became the major supplier of rubber and uranium to the Allied war effort. But when World War II ended, the Belgian government reasserted its control over the Congo, and Congolese resistance movements appeared. These efforts were generally nonviolent, and the Belgian government felt no particular pressure to grant Congo independence. In 1955, government officials formulated the *Thirty Year Plan for the Political Emancipation of Belgian Africa*, estimating that it would take that long to create an educated class of Congolese who could successfully run the country. Neither the Belgian government nor the Congolese were satisfied with the plan, and a significantly more radical independence movement appeared in 1958 under the charismatic leadership of Patrice Lumumba. Although he was popular with the Congolese, the Belgian government feared it would lose substantial financial interests through "nationalization" if the leftist Lumumba took control of the Congo.

Congolese frustration reached critical mass in January 1959 with a week of heavy rioting that left several hundred people dead. The Belgian government finally understood that independence would have to be granted but still wanted a gradual and carefully planned process.



Patrice Lumumba (left) and Belgian Premier Gaston Eyskens (right) both seated at the signing of the independence pact for the Congo, July 6, 1960.

Lumumba was arrested for inciting against the colonial government, which only led to increasingly violent protests. Desperate to avoid a costly and bloody war, the Belgian government granted the Congolese full independence with a general election in May 1960. Lumumba was released from prison and became part of a fragile coalition government.

The Congo achieved independence in June 1960, and less than a week later, Europeans were targeted in violent attacks across the new country. In response, the Belgian army moved in to evacuate 80,000 Belgians still living in the Congo. Lumumba was arrested and murdered with the assistance of the Belgian government and the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA). Ongoing rebellions and separatist movements have required the presence of UN peacekeepers ever since.

So while fierce nationalist movements fueled civil wars in the colonies, defeating the colonial power generally came at a tremendous human cost. And the road between decolonization and independent nation-state was a long and difficult one.

From Independence to Statehood

At the point of decolonization, most African states were fundamentally European creations that had little to no relationship to African traditions. Their immediate problem was establishing political stability, which was particularly difficult because they had no natural tradition of democracy or any experience running a government. Before they were colonies, most functioned as tribal-held territories. One of the most important tactics colonizers used to assert their control and prevent uprisings was to exacerbate the natural tribal divisions under the policy of “**divide and rule**.” Tribal allegiance, made more intense by decades of colonial favoritism for some, was a major problem for a potential government to overcome. New governments faced incredible challenges in creating democratic institutions to reach out and overcome tribalism because their populations were largely illiterate and had no concept of representative government.

divide and rule

a political, economic and military strategy to prevent small groups from linking together to form a larger, more powerful group

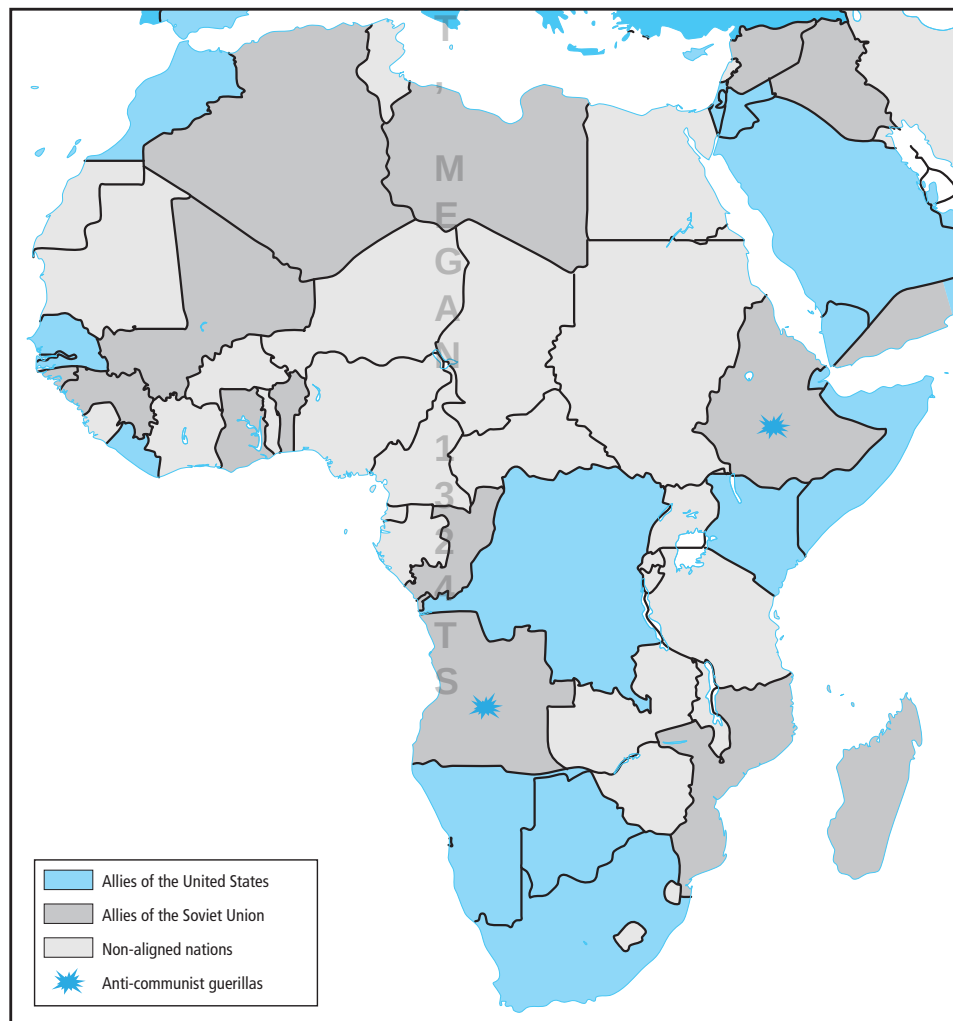
apartheid

social and political policy of racial segregation and discrimination enforced by white minority governments in South Africa from 1948 to 1994

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Creating Apartheid in South Africa on mysearchlab.com

There were many other divisions within national populations that created obstacles in developing new governments. In African states where individuals or European corporations owned lucrative oilfields and mines (particularly in southern Africa), those people stayed even after their governments had decolonized the territories. So there was a small minority of whites who basically controlled the economy and held onto political power, and they continued to discriminate against the majority black population through **apartheid**. Religion also created problems, with ongoing conflict between Muslims (much of northern Africa) and Orthodox Christians. Geography and climate were also major obstacles. How do you create economic self-sufficiency in the face of drought, desertification and famine? And it was incredibly difficult to establish transportation and communication lines from one end of a country to the next across the world's largest deserts (and with little money to purchase technology). Even when new governments were able to open lines of communication, schools, and a free press, which of Africa's 750 different languages should be used to reach the people?

Creating a stable, independent state under these conditions would be challenging for any government, but it was particularly difficult for former colonies that were starting with serious disadvantages. In southern African nations, apartheid maintained political, economic and social stability by extending colonial control. Many new governments in northern African nations sought regional support, getting involved in the tensions of the Middle East. Because it was the Cold War, some tried to establish socialist regimes, seeking financial assistance from the USSR.



MAP 9.2 Africa during the Cold War

Others tried democracy, unifying under the only thing the people had in common—anticolonialism. Most attempts at democracy quickly turned into a “one-party state” after multiple political parties led to civil war. Only a handful of African leaders were able to establish stable governments in the early Cold War years.

No matter what the initial nationalist governments tried, they could not successfully unite the people under one government, create economic self-sufficiency, and solve the societal problems that come with rapid industrialization. Beginning in the 1960s, a wave of *coups d'état* against nationalist governments swept across Africa—in twenty-five years, more than seventy leaders were overthrown in twenty-nine different countries. Most of these coups were carried out by military leaders who saw strong control (created through fear) as the only way to unite people and create stability. The military was the only institution people respected (feared), which gave these new military dictators, who often called themselves “presidents,” a whole lot of power. The result was significant political corruption, violence and outright genocide in a few cases. Civil war was the norm, and it was particularly exacerbated by the Cold War rivalry between the United States and the USSR.

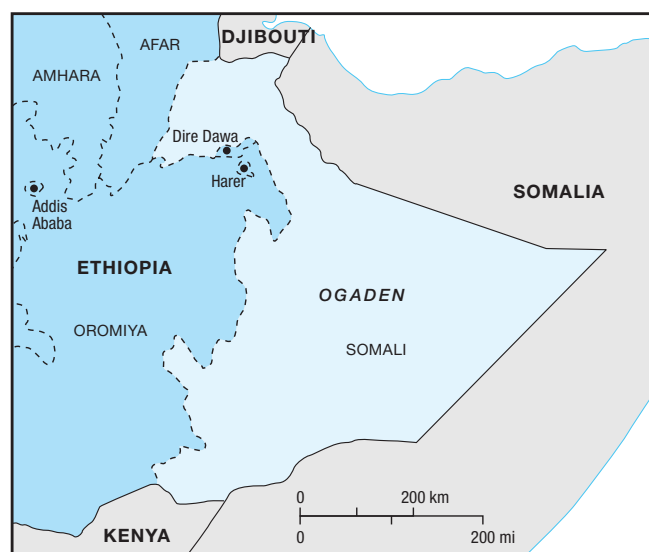
Somalia versus Ethiopia

Of the many examples of how Cold War politics shaped the process of independence for African nations, the Ogaden War of 1977 and 1978 demonstrates it most clearly. Colonization, tribalism, nationalism, territorial disputes and Soviet weapons came together to ignite a war between Somalia and Ethiopia.

In the colonial era, the territory of Somalia was divided between Ethiopia, Italy, Great Britain and France. In 1948, Great Britain gave some of that territory (good grazing land) to Ethiopia, but it was not until June 1960 that Great Britain relinquished control of the colony of Somaliland. On July 1, Somaliland was reunited with the former Italian colonial holding in the south, creating the Republic of Somalia. Somalia did not, however, regain a lot of its former territory, including the pieces that went to the neighboring country of Ethiopia. Political and tribal instability in Somalia led to a military coup in 1969, which gave way to a one-party socialist regime in 1976 that was supported by the USSR.

One of the oldest countries in the world, Ethiopia maintained its independence throughout most of its history, with the notable exception of Mussolini's occupation from 1936 to 1941. It was ruled (and had been since 1916) by Haile Selassie, who received millions of dollars in aid from Great Britain and the United States. But in 1974, a military Marxist coup called the Derg overthrew Emperor Selassie with the aid of the USSR. The Derg turned against the United States, closing the U.S. embassy in Ethiopia and ending the influx of U.S. financial aid, which led to economic upheaval, drought and famine. Instead, throughout 1976 and 1977, Ethiopia received increasing amounts of money and military equipment from the USSR. After a meeting between the Derg and Castro, Cuban military troops appeared in Ethiopia. To the Somali government, this could only mean one thing—Ethiopia was going to attack.

By Cold War “rules,” Somalia and Ethiopia should have been allies. They were both ruled by communist regimes and sat firmly in the Soviet sphere of influence. But tribal differences and age-old territorial disputes between the Somalis and the Ethiopians overrode that communist connection, something the Soviets could never understand. The Somali government was actually angry at the USSR for helping Ethiopia and requested equal military support to wage a war against its tribal enemy and regain its rightful land.



MAP 9.3 The Ogaden War

The USSR tried to convince the Somali and Ethiopian leaders to work together to solidify Soviet control in eastern Africa but could not negotiate an agreement. Somalia decided to seek help elsewhere, but the United States would not openly support a communist country. Still, President Jimmy Carter was angry about losing Ethiopia to the Soviets and worked through his ally Saudi Arabia to provide \$200 million in aid to Somalia in May 1977. Fearful of arming a communist country, Carter stopped short of providing military support.

Undeterred, the Somali government used its own military and recruited guerrilla volunteers to launch an invasion of Ethiopia on July 23, 1977. The Ethiopians were truly surprised, and the Somalis seized ten major towns in Ogaden within a few days. But the Soviet-supported Ethiopian counter-offensive in November, which included both Cuban and Russian soldiers, was powerful. By March 1978, all Somali troops were pushed back into their own country; however, the USSR forced Ethiopian troops to stop at the border rather than risk World War III.

As a proxy battle, the Ogaden War was somewhat of a draw: the USSR lost Somalia as an ally, but it gained Ethiopia. And although the United States could not openly support a communist government, Somalia did operate within its sphere of influence. This war, combined with events taking place in the Middle East, was confusing to the superpowers that saw the world in black and white. Countries could be either communist and fall within the Soviet sphere of influence or democratic and fall within the U.S. sphere of influence. Decolonization created many new countries that did not like either choice.

African Unity

Some African leaders came to believe (with good reason) that their problems establishing stable countries were a direct result of colonialism, and the Cold War conflict was only exacerbating it. To them, the wealthy countries of the East and West had used and exploited the African people throughout history, and the only way to break this cycle was to unite. Seizing on a philosophical movement from the turn of the century known as **Pan-Africanism**, the African leaders called for the creation of a United States of Africa. This would obviously be easier said than done, particularly on a continent where it is impossible to even pull together a few million people to form single, stable countries. They fundamentally disagreed on exactly who would be unified under Pan-Africanism: all black people of African descent, all people living on the African continent (including nonblacks), or all states on the African continent? Continental Pan-Africanism focused on the unity of states and political cooperation, while Diaspora Pan-Africanism demanded racial unity for black Africans and people of African descent all around the world. Others wanted unity for religious reasons, and others sought unified economic agreements. The tangible result of the Pan-Africanism movement was the creation of the thirty-two member Organization of African Unity (OAU) in May 1963, but the organization never really went anywhere in terms of creating unity. Different countries had different experiences and needs and thus pursued different paths. True African unity has been made impossible because of political instability, corrupt governments, social unrest, and abject poverty—all long-term consequences of colonialism.

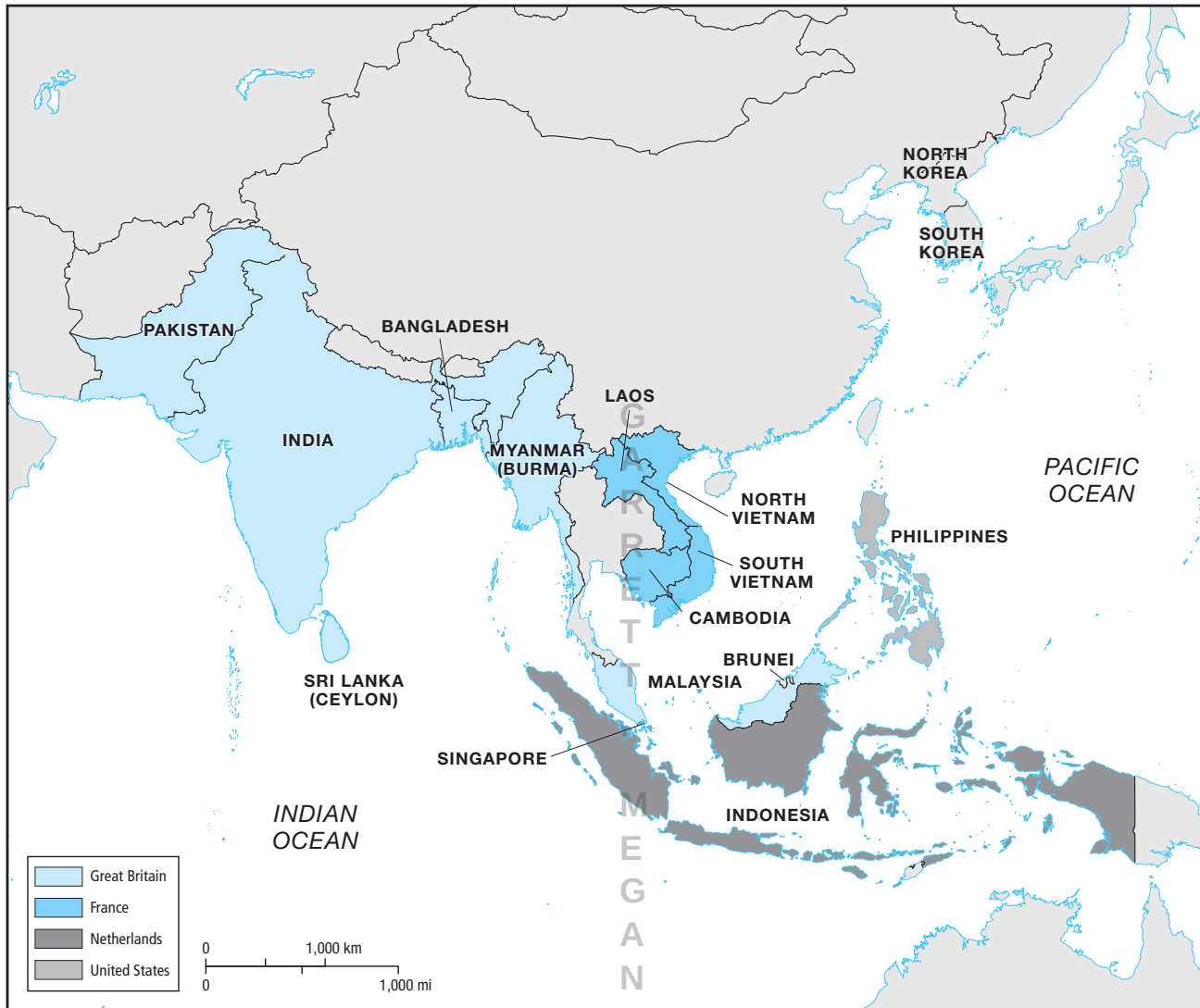
Southeast Asia

The problems associated with decolonization in Southeast Asia were intricately linked to the manner in which the colonies were originally established throughout the sixteenth to early twentieth centuries. As European governments searched for trade markets in the East, the many islands and diverse inhabitants of Southeast Asia were united under the colonial empires of Portugal, Spain, Holland, France, England, Japan and the United States. The islands were continually redistributed as the imperial powers fought and defeated one another to control the lucrative natural resources and trade routes. On the eve of World War II, the dominant powers in the region were French Indochina (Vietnam, Laos and Cambodia) and Dutch-controlled Indonesia, but the United States had established a foothold in the Philippines in an attempt to limit Japan's increasingly aggressive imperialism in the Pacific. During the war, Japan seized

Pan-Africanism

a philosophy espousing that African people share common bonds and objectives, and only by unifying will they be able to achieve them

 Read the Document American Objectives in Southeast Asia on mysearchlab.com



MAP 9.4 Southeast Asia

control of much of Southeast Asia and ruled by military force, sparking particularly violent resistance movements in Burma, Malaya, Indonesia and Indochina.

As a result of the many cultural impositions on the diverse indigenous people over the centuries, the decolonization process created disputes and outright wars over territorial borders, political legitimacy, resource distribution, ethnicity and religion. Unlike Africa, where there was no clear regional power to move in and fill the void left by decolonization, the USSR, Japan and China were all struggling for control in the region. Decolonization happened quickly after World War II, and these regional conflicts grew into devastating wars because of U.S., Soviet and Chinese intervention. The people of Southeast Asia were used to fighting—first against European imperialists, then against Japan—and were prepared to defend themselves against Cold War domination as well. Two case studies provide detailed insight into the high stakes of Southeast Asian decolonization in regional and global contexts.

Indonesia

Consisting of 3,600 islands spanning 3,000 miles of ocean, Indonesia is the largest country in Southeast Asia. The Dutch established control over the economy of the larger islands in the early 1600s and gradually extended their borders under authoritarian colonial rule in the 1800s. They

exploited the natural resources of the islands, generating significant wealth for the Dutch economy but creating further divisions between the different ethnic and socioeconomic groups in Indonesia. In the late nineteenth century, the Dutch conquered the entire East Indies and built extensive communication and transportation systems to link their empire together in a very efficient and modern economic machine. Of course, all wealth went to the Netherlands, and the standard of living for the Indonesian people remained low.

Nationalist movements appeared in the early twentieth century, certainly as a result of economic discontent, but also largely driven by the desire to restore traditional Indonesian culture. Political movements such as the “Noble Endeavour,” the “Islamic Association,” the Indies Party, and a Soviet-sponsored Comintern pressured the Dutch government to allow them to participate. Because these groups all had different goals, tensions between them led to revolts that the Dutch easily quelled. But in 1926, a nationalist movement developed around the one basic thing all Indonesians believed in—the struggle for independence. Led by Sukarno, this new Indonesian Nationalist Party had a broad base of support. The Dutch arrested and exiled Sukarno, and the Indonesian Nationalist Party split apart without his leadership.

In May 1940, Holland was occupied by Nazi Germany as World War II began in Europe. Two years later, Japan invaded Indonesia and expelled the Dutch. But Japan’s primary interest in the region was obtaining the resources it needed to feed its war machine, and 25 percent of its oil supply came from Indonesia. The Japanese saw themselves as liberators of the Indonesian people and promised them they would establish a nonexploitative economic and cultural arrangement. But that arrangement was established by a militaristic regime in the midst of a major war, so it was not exactly a peaceful one. The needs of the Japanese military came first, so food and necessary supplies were sent to them at the peril of the Indonesian people. Between 4 and 10 million people were sent to forced labor camps to work on defense construction projects, reinvigorating the Indonesian independence movement. As the Japanese began to lose in the Pacific war, they increasingly worked closely with the nationalist leadership of Indonesia to mobilize the people for the war effort. Sukarno viewed it as an opportunity for independence once the war was over; the Japanese government viewed it as a way to create more problems for the Allies.

In August 1945, just two days after the Japanese surrendered, Sukarno declared independence and became president of Indonesia. The Netherlands tried to reassert its colonial rule but gave up in 1949 under pressure from the United Nations. To maintain unity in the large and diverse country, Sukarno established an authoritarian government led by military rule, but he also allowed the Communist Party to exist. Frustrated by the restrictions of Cold War politics, Sukarno was a founder of the Non-Aligned Movement in 1960. A coup attempt against Sukarno in 1965 resulted in the death of 500,000 to 1 million people; and the head of the military, General Suharto, replaced Sukarno in 1968 with the support of the U.S. government. Suharto maintained a corrupt, authoritarian regime until 1998.

Vietnam

No case study exemplifies the complex intersection of decolonization and the Cold War as clearly as what happened in the former French colony of Indochina (Cambodia, Laos and Vietnam). Vietnam was a colony of France until Ho Chi Minh organized a nationalist revolution. The First Indochina War lasted for eight years, ending in summer 1954 with a crushing defeat for the French at the battle of Dien Bien Phu. Despite the United Nations’ push for decolonization, the United States financially supported France during the war to help it maintain control of its colonies in Indochina. The Cold War was on, and Ho Chi Minh was receiving aid from both the USSR and the PRC. There was every reason for the United States to believe that Vietnam would become a communist country under Ho Chi Minh’s leadership.

Even as the Battle of Dien Bien Phu raged on, the **Geneva Conference** was convened in spring 1954 to figure out what to do with the former colonies of French Indochina. Cambodia

Geneva Conference

1954 meeting of the USSR, the PRC, the United States, France, Great Britain and French Indochina to deal with decolonization—the United States refused to sign the resulting agreement



Sukarno in Washington, D.C., 1956.

and Laos were granted full independence and established constitutional monarchies, but there was disagreement over Vietnam. The West would agree to grant independence to a democratic regime, and the East, of course, wanted to ensure that Ho Chi Minh could establish his communist regime. The two sides were at an impasse, so, like Korea and Berlin before it, Vietnam was divided at the 17th parallel by a “provisional military demarcation line.” The Vietminh retreated north of the ceasefire line, and the Vietnamese military, which had supported the French, stayed south of it. Both regrouped while awaiting the reunification of the country as the Geneva Agreements promised. Foreign militaries were ordered to leave Vietnam, and an International Control Commission consisting of India, Poland and Canada was established to make sure all parties followed the rules, but the commission had no power to take action if they did not. The Geneva Agreements made it very clear that the division of Vietnam was a temporary one designed only to prevent further military aggression while the country prepared for a democratic election (supervised by the United Nations) to be held in July 1956. When the Vietnamese people chose their government in a nationwide election, the country would be reunited.

Immediately, a large-scale migration took place. Roughly 1 million civilians moved to the south, and about 52,000 went north. While the communist leadership remained in the north, many communist supporters were told to remain in the south to affect the outcome of the elections. In the meantime, the United States, the USSR and the PRC consistently violated the Geneva Agreements. In North Vietnam, the USSR and the PRC supported Ho Chi Minh’s government and the North Vietnamese Regular Army (NVA). In South Vietnam, the United States stepped in to fill the political void left by the French. The CIA supported a non-violent coup by Prime Minister Ngo Dinh Diem over Emperor Bao Dai by rigging a referendum vote in October 1955 in which Diem won 98 percent of the vote (133 percent in the city of Saigon). The United States also helped build the Army of the Republic of Vietnam (ARVN) in the south. To combat Diem’s regime, communist civilians who remained in South Vietnam put together the Vietcong (VC), which was militarily supported by the NVA.

 Read the Document “The Final Declaration on Indochina” on mysearchlab.com

 Read the Document Ho Chi Minh on Self Determination on mysearchlab.com

ANALYSIS

How did the wording of the Geneva Agreements affect Soviet and American actions in the late 1950s and early 1960s?



MAP 9.5 Vietnam in 1956

... the military demarcation line is provisional and should not in any way be interpreted as constituting a political or territorial boundary (Article 6)

domino theory

if one country in southeast Asia became communist (Vietnam), the rest would follow (Laos, Cambodia, Thailand, Burma, Malaysia and Indonesia)

North Vietnam

Ho Chi Minh established his single-party government in the city of Hanoi. His primary concern was a nationalist one—reuniting Vietnam—but enacting communist policies was a close second. Ho Chi Minh's regime was brutal for citizens who did not hold the same values—tens of thousands of dissenters and landowners were imprisoned and executed as he strengthened his political authority and embarked on radical land reforms. Minh's many years serving the Comintern throughout Europe and Asia taught him how to balance the USSR and the PRC, so even as the relationship between the two fell apart in 1960, Minh was able to retain the financial and military support of both. His military was led by Vo Nguyen Giap, and it excelled at utilizing guerrilla tactics against the regular militaries of the French and Americans.

South Vietnam

The political situation in South Vietnam was much more complicated. The United States supported the regime of President Diem, who was really an autocratic leader rather than a democratic one, but he was an anti-communist. Where Ho Chi Minh and his supporters were focused on reuniting Vietnam, the goal for Diem and the United States was simply to prevent South Vietnam from becoming communist. U.S. President Kennedy sent 16,000 advisors (mostly diplomats, CIA and Special Forces troops) to help Diem hold on, but they faced stiff opposition. There were tens of thousands of communists in the south who carried out assassinations against

Despite the best efforts of the South Vietnamese government and the United States, most people in Vietnam, both north and south, loved Ho Chi Minh. He was their George Washington—he successfully led the revolutionary movement to free them from colonial oppression. To the Vietnamese, Ho Chi Minh was a nationalist looking out for the Vietnamese people, while the United States obviously was trying to recolonize them by separating them and establishing a puppet regime in South Vietnam. By the summer of 1956, it was clear that, if democratic, free elections were held, the people would vote for Ho Chi Minh, who would establish a communist regime in the reunited Vietnam.

Diem was not anxious to hold an election that would end his political career. And with the U.S. foreign policy commitment to containment and President Eisenhower's belief in the **domino theory**, there was no way the United States could allow Vietnam to reunite under a communist government. In 1956, with the full backing of the United States, Diem canceled the reunification election under the premise that the Republic of Vietnam (his government) did not sign the Geneva Agreements and was, therefore, not legally bound to uphold it. Ho Chi Minh's reaction was swift and violent—he ordered the VC to launch guerrilla attacks against the Diem regime. Several thousand communist infiltrators moved to South Vietnam to join the VC, and they created a rival political party, the National Liberation Front. Ho Chi Minh was determined to reunite Vietnam, and he ignited a civil war to accomplish it. Because it was the Cold War, that civil war was fueled by the United States, the USSR and the PRC and became the Second Indochina War.



Eisenhower and Ngo Dinh Diem.

local government officials (growing from 1,200 in 1959 to 4,000 in 1961). And Diem's brutality turned many anticommunists in the south against him as well. As the political arm of the Viet Cong, the National Liberation Front was a very active anti-Diem alliance of communists, moderate political parties and religious groups.

Like Eisenhower before him, Kennedy believed in the domino theory. He was already concerned about the spread of communism into the western hemisphere through Cuba, and he resolved to prevent it from spreading across Asia as well. The question was the best way to do it—could the United States continue to prevent democratic elections because the U.S. government would not like the outcome? Could Kennedy justify supporting a brutal dictator in Diem? And if not, would U.S. troops have to be sent to fight Ho Chi Minh? France and Great Britain, Kennedy's allies on the UN Security Council, made it clear they wanted no part of a war in Vietnam, and the USSR would most certainly veto UN action, so saving South Vietnam from communism would fall to the United States alone. In 1961, the U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff estimated that it would take 40,000 U.S. troops to defeat both the NVA and the VC, but Kennedy resisted.

In August 1963, Diem declared **martial law** in South Vietnam and used troops funded by the United States to carry out violent raids against protestors. Kennedy had had enough, and he helped ARVN military officers plan a coup to overthrow Diem's government and send him into exile. On November 1, 1963, a group of Diem's top generals and bodyguards arrested Diem and his brother and then murdered them. The official cause of death for both was "accidental suicide" as they were resisting arrest, though the accompanying photographs clearly showed that their hands were tied. Kennedy was shocked, but given the level of U.S. involvement in the coup, he had no choice but to recognize the new military regime as the legitimate government of South

...Finally, you have broader considerations that might follow what you would call the "falling domino" principle. You have a row of dominoes set up, you knock over the first one, and what will happen to the last one is the certainty that it will go over very quickly. So you could have a beginning of a disintegration that would have the most profound influences...

—Dwight D. Eisenhower, April 7, 1957

martial law

the temporary military takeover of domestic law enforcement

A document declassified in 2003 shows that torpedo fire “appear(ed) doubtful” and “freak weather effects” on radar and “over-eager” sonarmen were probably the source of the reports because there were “no visual sightings” of enemy ships. (Captain John Herrick, naval commander in the Gulf of Tonkin in August 1964)

Years after the incident, retired Admiral James Stockdale wrote: “There was absolutely no gunfire except our own, no PT boat wakes, not a candle light let alone a burning ship. None could have been there and not have been seen on such a black night... I had the best seat in the house from which to detect boats—if there were any.”

In February 1968, the Senate Foreign Relations Committee held investigative hearings, charging that the Defense Department had withheld information and the Gulf of Tonkin Resolution passed because of a “credibility gap.”

In 1995, Robert McNamara admitted he lied to Congress.

Vietnam. The people of Saigon initially responded with enthusiasm, but the assassination left the country with no clear leader throughout the war that followed—a series of coups put one ARVN general after another in the president’s office.

The Second Indochina War

Within weeks of Diem’s murder, President Kennedy was assassinated in the United States. Vice President Lyndon Johnson assumed office determined not to lose Vietnam to the communists. Johnson too feared the potentially disastrous effects of allowing communism to spread in Asia: “If we quit Vietnam, tomorrow we’ll be fighting in Hawaii and next week we’ll have to be fighting in San Francisco.” But he also realized that sending troops to Vietnam would be unpopular with U.S. citizens. Johnson increased reconnaissance to get a better understanding of the NVA’s military capabilities, and he initiated OPLAN 34-A, covert naval commando attacks on North Vietnamese targets.

On August 2, 1964, the American destroyer *USS Maddox* exchanged fire with North Vietnamese torpedo boats in the Gulf of Tonkin. The United States claimed the *Maddox* was in international waters simply to exert a U.S. presence; however, declassified documents reveal that the destroyer was there in support of covert raids on North Vietnam occurring at the time. President Johnson warned the NVA not to provoke the United States, and he sent a second destroyer, the *USS Turner Joy*, into the Gulf of Tonkin to back up the *Maddox*. On the night of August 4, both ships reported being under attack and fired back, claiming they sunk two NVA torpedo boats. President Johnson used this second attack to justify retaliatory bombings of North Vietnam, and he went to Congress requesting authority to send U.S. troops to Vietnam. On August 5, 1964, Lyndon Johnson told the U.S. Congress:

Our policy in southeast Asia has been consistent and unchanged since 1954: (1) America keeps her word. Here as elsewhere, we must and shall honor our commitments; (2) the issue is the future of southeast Asia as a whole. A threat to any nation in that region is a threat to all, and a threat to us; (3) our purpose is peace. We have no military, political, or territorial ambitions in the area; (4) this is not just a jungle war, but a struggle for freedom on every front of human activity...

The Senate Foreign Relations Committee and the Armed Services Committee met in a closed session to discuss Johnson’s request. There was considerable debate about whether the attacks in the Gulf of Tonkin were unprovoked, but U.S. Secretary of Defense Robert McNamara assured committee members that OPLAN 34-A was a South Vietnamese mission only. Conflicting evidence and a leak from the Pentagon led to a debate over whether the August 4 attack had even occurred. McNamara assured them that it did. Two senators expressed serious concerns about giving the U.S. president the power to effectively wage a war without Congressional oversight, as required by the U.S. Constitution. But after just two days of deliberation, the U.S. Congress overwhelmingly passed the Gulf of Tonkin Resolution—unanimously in the House and 88 to 2 in the Senate. The American people responded to Congress’s support with increased confidence in President Johnson—his poll numbers rose from 42 percent to 72 percent, and he was elected president in November with 61 percent of the vote.

President Johnson viewed Vietnam as a classic battle by proxy. His goal was for U.S. troops to support ARVN so that the South Vietnamese government could defend itself against communism. The situation appeared to shape up this way early on when, in February 1965, the USSR announced

 Read the Document *The Tonkin Gulf Resolution* on mysearchlab.com

it would provide unconditional military support to the North Vietnamese. That month, Johnson initiated Operation Rolling Thunder, an operation that was supposed to be an eight-week bombing campaign by the U.S. air force and navy to demonstrate to Ho Chi Minh and the Soviets that the United States was supporting the south. Johnson thought that a show of the superiority of U.S. airpower would make Ho Chi Minh back off. He did not want to provoke the PRC or the USSR, so there were limits placed on the number of missions flown and the targets they could go after. But Ho Chi Minh was not deterred, and he focused his fight where he had the clear military advantage—on the ground.

On March 8, 1965, the first U.S. ground troops (3,500 marines) landed in South Vietnam at Da Nang. Because of the potential for World War III, U.S. troops were to remain on South Vietnamese soil in a defensive position. Air attacks on North Vietnam escalated, with Operation Flaming Dart and Operation ArcLight added to the ongoing Operation Rolling Thunder. It quickly became obvious that ARVN needed more than just U.S. support to fight off the NVA and the VC.

American soldiers found themselves in a baffling war unlike any they had fought before. The first problem was figuring out who the enemy was. The only difference between the North and South Vietnamese people was the imaginary political line drawn by the parties at the Geneva Conference, so an NVA soldier out of uniform looked exactly like an ARVN soldier. Furthermore, U.S. troops could not assume that civilians in their own territory (South Vietnam) were friendly, because many of them were part of, or at least sympathetic to, the VC.

U.S. troops were fighting in an unfamiliar jungle against people who knew the terrain intimately because they had been fighting the Japanese (at the end of World War II) and the French there since the mid-1940s. To further complicate matters, Ho Chi Minh had built an expansive system of underground tunnels to quickly move supplies and men across Vietnam during the First Indochina War. These tunnels allowed the NVA and the VC to penetrate U.S. lines, kill American troops and then seemingly disappear. The VC was particularly difficult to fight, because the group was mostly made up of civilians who would booby trap roads and villages. These guerrilla tactics were how the NVA and the VC fought, and they were incredibly difficult for U.S. soldiers to combat.

A third and related problem for the U.S. troops and officers alike was the lack of a clear mission from their commander-in-chief. The goal of the U.S. military was not to win the war, which was completely foreign thinking for U.S. military strategists, officers and infantry. Their planning and training was geared toward offensive missions, and in South Vietnam they were sent to defend and support ARVN. But after a few crushing defeats in 1965, ARVN's morale was dropping quickly, and its desertion rate was skyrocketing (about 5,500 soldiers a month). ARVN, on its own, clearly could not defeat North Vietnam, but neither was Johnson ready to concede defeat to communism. There were 184,300 US troops in South Vietnam by the summer of 1965.

At the end of 1965, it was obvious to General William Westmoreland and President Johnson that they would have to switch strategies to be successful in Vietnam. Westmoreland believed that, with a serious commitment of troops, the NVA and the VC could be defeated by the end of 1967. As the number of U.S. troops going to Vietnam increased, the protests and questions about why the United States was involved increased as well. Journalists and photographers sent the U.S. public a



Clearing the jungle in Da Nang, Vietnam, May 1970.



MAP 9.6 Vietnam, Laos, and Cambodia

steady stream of photographs and stories about American bombing missions, the use of napalm, and tens of thousands of villagers in South Vietnam (our supposed allies) displaced. U.S. television networks kept a running tally of the U.S. body count, and U.S. soldiers wrote home describing their frustrating experiences. These messages were inconsistent with the White House press briefings, which assured Americans that the goal was the same—to support ARVN in defending its borders—and that the U.S. and ARVN were getting closer to victory every day. With U.S. soldier and citizen morale dropping, Johnson attempted to force the North Vietnamese to the negotiating table with increased bombing campaigns targeting the Ho Chi Minh Trail, the highly effective supply line that linked North Vietnam with its armies in the South via the neutral countries of Cambodia and Laos. Ho Chi Minh refused to negotiate. By the end of 1966, there were 362,000 U.S. soldiers in Vietnam.

In January 1967, committed to taking the lead in defending South Vietnam, the United States became more aggressive about destroying the VC tunnels and hiding places. Operation Cedar Falls was a moderately successful search-and-destroy mission intended to end the constant VC raids in the capital city of Saigon. That same month, the NVA launched air attacks on U.S. bases in South Vietnam just over the border of the demilitarized zone (DMZ), drawing U.S. troops and equipment north to support them. Throughout the year, the VC stepped up its activity

in the villages of South Vietnam, leading to many difficult confrontations between U.S. troops and VC but no real decisive battles in either direction.

In May 1967, amidst citizen protests and Congressional investigations about the government's conduct of the war, General Westmoreland went before a divided and angry Congress to update members on U.S. military actions in Vietnam. Some in Congress raised concerns that the shift from defensive to offensive activities would have potentially disastrous effects: "The new level of escalation marked by our bombing of the North Vietnamese airfields has brought us one step closer to World War III involving the limitless legions of [the PRC] backed by the enormous firepower of Soviet Russia" (Senator George McGovern (D), South Dakota). Westmoreland reminded them of the domino effect that a communist takeover in South Vietnam could set off, and warned: "I foresee, in the months ahead, some of the bitterest fighting of the war. . . It's going to be a question of putting maximum pressure on the enemy anywhere and everywhere that we can. We will have to grind him down. In effect, we are fighting a **war of attrition**." By the end of 1967, U.S. forces in Vietnam numbered 485,000.

1968: The Turning Point

The proxy battle in Vietnam became a quagmire for the U.S. military. The United States' original goal was to assist South Vietnam in resisting a communist invasion from the North and/or an internal coup by the VC, but as the war dragged on, the South Vietnamese government and military actually became *less* able to defend itself. President Johnson was faced with two choices: (1) abandon South Vietnam, basically ensuring that it would fall to communism along with, according to the domino theory, the rest of Southeast Asia; or (2) build up the U.S. troop presence and take the lead in defeating the NVA and the VC. By the time Johnson really committed to the second option, Ho Chi Minh was in excellent position to conquer South Vietnam because of his VC supporters operating in the south, a well-armed regular military and the frustration and dwindling morale of U.S. soldiers.

On January 31, 1968, North Vietnam struck a serious blow with the **Tet Offensive**. The NVA and VC staged a series of coordinated, surprise attacks on eighty South Vietnamese cities, including the capital city of Saigon, the provincial and district capitals, and fifty large towns. The attacks were a surprise for a few reasons: (1) a temporary cease-fire had been called to allow civilians throughout Vietnam to celebrate the Tet holiday; (2) the attacks occurred in cities, but the NVA and VC had drawn most ARVN and U.S. troops to the DMZ and out to the villages in fighting throughout 1967; and (3) the coordinated attacks involved 85,000 NVA and VC—a much stronger force than U.S. strategists thought Ho Chi Minh had.

In Saigon, the NVA and VC attacked the presidential palace, the airport, the main radio station, ARVN headquarters, and even briefly seized the U.S. embassy, killing five marines in the process. ARVN and U.S. troops regrouped and retook Saigon within a week, but it took until the end of February to regain control of the other cities. The VC really dug in and held on in the former imperial capital of Vietnam, Hue. In what became known as the "Massacre at Hue," they executed thousands of civilians and a hundred thousand more lost their homes in door-to-door combat that destroyed the historic city. By pure military standards, the Tet Offensive was a victory for ARVN and the United States. The NVA and VC lost more soldiers (45,000 versus 4,000 ARVN and U.S. troops) and were unable to hold on to the territory they initially gained in the attacks. But the United States was humiliated—military strategists were obviously unprepared and had seriously underestimated Ho Chi Minh and his supporters.

On January 21, 1968, the NVA launched an air attack on the heavily fortified U.S. marine corps base at Khe Sanh. Khe Sanh was a vital base because its location, just a few miles from the borders of North Vietnam and Laos, provided the United States access to the Ho Chi Minh Trail. As the United States focused on defending the base, NVA and VC began infiltrating cities in South Vietnam completely unnoticed in preparation for the Tet Offensive. The assault on Khe Sanh continued throughout February and March, expanding into a full-scale ground and air siege. Keeping the base supplied to defend itself required a massive air and land operation, but the operation paid

 [Watch the Video Newsreel: Peace March, Thousands Oppose Vietnam War on mysearchlab.com](#)

war of attrition

an attempt to reduce the effectiveness of a military force to the point of collapse by destroying its personnel and material; the war is won by the side with greater resources

Tet

a national holiday in Vietnam celebrating the first day of the New Year

 [Watch the Video The Tet Offensive on mysearchlab.com](#)



This photograph, which shows an ARVN officer executing a VC foot soldier on the street during the Tet Offensive, outraged citizens in the West when it was published and fueled the antiwar movement. But press did not tell the story behind this scene—just before this photo was taken, the officer had discovered the beheaded body of a colleague and friend and the bodies of his wife and six children, all killed by the VC.

MAKE THE CONNECTION

- How did the media influence Western perceptions of the proxy battle in Vietnam?
- How has media coverage of war changed since Vietnam?
- Should media coverage of war be censored?

off by the end of March when the NVA began its retreat. ARVN and U.S. reinforcements arrived to relieve the beleaguered base in April, and the U.S. government moved the marines to other locations, gradually reducing the number of men at Khe Sanh. In late June, the U.S. government decided that keeping the base at Khe Sanh open was too costly and ordered the base evacuated and closed. Like the Tet Offensive, the siege at Khe Sanh was a military victory for the United States (only 205 U.S. troops killed versus 15,000 NVA), but a stunning blow to U.S. troops in Vietnam and citizens at home. Why did U.S. troops lose their lives to defend a base that the U.S. government so quickly abandoned?

Another fateful event in early 1968 weakened the U.S. government's resolve to continue escalating the conflict in Vietnam. On March 16, 1968, Charlie Company, 11th Brigade, entered the village of My Lai on a search-and-destroy mission. VC had been very active against Charlie Company in the region and, in the wake of the Tet Offensive and the siege at Khe Sanh, U.S. troops were frustrated and angry. They were sure the VC was in My Lai and went into the village firing, although there was no report of enemy fire. More than three hundred unarmed civilians (men, women, children and the elderly) were killed in what became known as the "My Lai Massacre." The military investigation that followed uncovered serious problems with U.S. military leadership, discipline and morale among the troops. Lieutenant William Calley, who led his men into the village firing, was convicted of murder in March 1971.

In February 1968, just after the Tet Offensive, General Westmoreland told President Johnson that the United States could defeat the VC, but it would take several years to accomplish, require at least 200,000 more American soldiers, and probably involve U.S. invasions of neutral neighboring countries Cambodia and Laos to shut down the Ho Chi Minh Trail. Secretary of Defense Robert McNamara, one of Johnson's most trusted advisors, disagreed

 Read the Document Lyndon B. Johnson's Address to the Nation on mysearchlab.com

heartily and resigned from office. In March, his replacement, Clark Clifford, told Johnson that he did not believe the United States could win the war in Vietnam, even with more men, and convinced Johnson to provide Westmoreland with only 24,500 more troops, a fraction of what was requested. With the NVA's strength demonstrated at Khe Sanh, the VC's ability to continuously recruit and seemingly outwit U.S. strategists, and serious problems within the U.S. military, Clifford and the rest of Johnson's advisors had turned against the war and recommended Johnson seek a negotiated withdrawal. Later that month, a beleaguered President Johnson spoke to America and the world, announcing that he would unilaterally scale back the violence in Vietnam. He called on allies and enemies for support in negotiating peace. And with his approval rating at a mere 36 percent, Johnson announced that he would not run for reelection. U.S. forces in Vietnam at the end of 1968 reached 537,000, and an average of 1,200 a month were killed in action.



President Johnson, March 31, 1968.

Vietnamization

Richard Nixon was elected U.S. president in November 1968. While campaigning, he promised Americans an “honorable” end to U.S. military involvement in Vietnam. Nixon and his National Security Advisor Henry Kissinger believed that it was not possible for the United States to achieve a victory in Vietnam—the U.S. Congress and people would not allow more troops to be sent there, which is what a victory would take. But neither could Nixon withdraw all the troops, which would send a clear message to the USSR that the United States simply quit when things became difficult. Nixon's administration developed a foreign policy known as Vietnamization—focusing U.S. military efforts on preparing the South Vietnamese to gradually take over the ground war while the United States continued to provide air support and money. This would allow Nixon to gradually withdraw U.S. troops, but it would require time, money and patience.

As the proxy battle within Vietnam dragged on, the Cold War changed a bit. Funding North Vietnam was a major drain on the communist economies of the USSR and the PRC. And as long as U.S. troops were on the ground in Southeast Asia, the risk for WWII remained unacceptably high for both the East and the West. Nixon pursued a **triangular diplomacy**, using the Sino-Soviet split as leverage to improve his relationship with Mao's PRC. He hoped to encourage Mao to push North Vietnam into peace negotiations with South Vietnam, which seemed more possible because Ho Chi Minh's death in September 1969 left North Vietnam with a leadership council rather than a strong, charismatic leader.

A public opinion poll when Nixon took office revealed that most Americans supported Vietnamization policy but only if it did not take very long to achieve. Unfortunately, the methods of Vietnamization were a bit schizophrenic, leading U.S. involvement in Southeast Asia to drag on for five more years. Nixon withdrew U.S. troops from Vietnam steadily throughout 1970, but he also engaged in aggressive bombing campaigns of the neutral countries of Cambodia and Laos and lied about it to cover up U.S. involvement. In April, Nixon went on television to announce that ARVN and U.S. troops were going to invade Cambodia together to reduce the effectiveness of the Ho Chi Minh Trail. Instead, the invasion ignited a violent civil war in that country that led to the rise of a brutal communist regime called the Khmer Rouge. Still, because of Vietnamization, at the end of 1970, there were 280,000 American troops in

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triangular diplomacy

Nixon's belief that there were two rival powers in the communist world—the USSR and the PRC—and the United States could exploit that rivalry to weaken the enemy and win the Cold War



President Nixon on television, April 30, 1970.

FIFTEEN YEARS IN VIETNAM

- 2 million Americans served, 500,000 in actual combat
- 47,244 Americans were killed in action
- 10,446 Americans were killed in noncombat
- 153,329 Americans were seriously wounded, including 10,000 amputees
- More than 2,400 American POWs/MIAs were unaccounted for at the end of 1973
- 3 to 4 million Vietnamese were killed
- 1.5 to 2 million Laotians and Cambodians were killed

Vietnam (and another 30,000 CIA operatives), with an average of 344 U.S. servicemen killed in action each month.

In February 1971, Nixon tested the strength of his Vietnamization policy by committing only U.S. air and tactical support to an ARVN invasion of Laos. Unfortunately, ARVN proved that it could not handle the NVA on the ground. One-half of the invasion force was killed in a month, and the rest had to be airlifted from Laos by the United States at the end of March. Still, Nixon continued to withdraw U.S. troops from Vietnam—there were 157,000 troops left at the end of 1971, and the average number of men killed in action per month dropped to 123.

In February 1972, the United States reignited aggressive air attacks against North Vietnam and mined North Vietnamese harbors.

On March 23, the U.S. government boycotted the Paris peace talks because Nixon did not believe that the North Vietnamese government was taking the process seriously. And that summer, the United States began bombing Hanoi again, which culminated in one of the largest bombing missions of the entire war in December 1972. But even with peace negotiations stalled, the United States withdrew 70,000 troops in early 1972, followed by another 20,000 in April and 10,000 in June. There were just 27,400 U.S. troops in Vietnam on Election Day 1972 when Nixon won reelection.

By the fall of 1972, at the urging of the PRC, the leadership of North Vietnam had generally agreed to create some sort of treaty to end the war, but they were far from hammering out the details. Furthermore, the president of South Vietnam, Nguyen Van Thieu, refused to accept any agreement that did not include a complete withdrawal of NVA troops from the south and the recognition of South Vietnam as a separate, sovereign state. Nixon was tough with Thieu: “Let me emphasize...you must decide now whether you desire to continue our alliance or whether you want me to seek a settlement with the enemy which serves U.S. interests alone.” Thieu capitulated, believing that it would ensure continued U.S. support for his government. On January 27, 1973, the

proxy battle in Vietnam officially ended under the following conditions: (1) a ceasefire would be in effect throughout southeast Asia; (2) the United States would withdraw its remaining troops; (3) all U.S. prisoners of war would be returned within sixty days; (4) the Thieu government would remain in power in South Vietnam; and (4) the NVA would be permitted to remain in areas of South Vietnam they had seized. Unfortunately, almost every aspect of the agreement was violated except the last one.

The final terms of the negotiated peace agreement were identical to the ones proposed by North Vietnam four years earlier at the beginning of Nixon’s first term. Although the last U.S. troops were pulled out of Vietnam at the end of March, thousands of U.S. “advisors” remained in Saigon and the “secret” air war over Cambodia and Laos continued. Washing its hands of the conflict, the U.S. Congress forbade further U.S. military involvement in Southeast Asia and drastically cut funding to South Vietnam to just \$700 million. From 1965 to 1975, the United States spent \$111 billion on the conflict. U.S. military strategists knew that ARVN was not capable of holding off the NVA (the fifth-largest military in the world at the time thanks to Soviet funding), but they anticipated it would take about two years for North Vietnam to overrun Saigon.

In August 1974, Richard Nixon resigned as U.S. president in the face of certain impeachment for a string of illegal activities while running for reelection. When Vice President Gerald Ford took office, he became the fifth U.S. president to deal with the Vietnam conflict. That December, NVA troops attacked South Vietnam. The United States was unable to respond militarily because of the Congressional ban, despite Nixon's earlier pledge to take "severe retaliatory action" if the NVA violated the peace agreement. In January 1975, Ford stated unequivocally that the United States would not reenter the war, igniting a barrage of condemnation from President Thieu. The CIA took Thieu to Taiwan to live in exile.

With no real defense against the NVA and VC, Saigon fell in less than two months. The United States staged Operation Frequent Wind, a dramatic helicopter escape that evacuated 7,000 Americans and South Vietnamese government officials as VC and NVA looted the U.S. bases and embassy in South Vietnam. On April 30, 1975, Vietnam was reunited under the communist regime of the north. In 1976, Vietnam signed a cooperative agreement with the communist government of Laos, and it invaded Cambodia in December 1978 to overthrow the Khmer Rouge and establish a "Vietnamese-friendly" regime.

The Non-Aligned Movement

During the Cold War, the superpowers sought to divide the world into two spheres of influence, using their military and financial power to urge, force and attract countries to their particular ideological persuasion. To former empires, allying with one side afforded them a degree of ongoing power. To power-hungry leaders in smaller independent states, allying with one side gave them much-needed financial and military resources. To many former colonies, this was yet another attempt by the powerful countries of the world to exploit them, and they did not want any part of it. After a few years of discussion about the potential danger of the escalating arms race between the United States and the USSR, Indian Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru, President of Egypt Gamal Nasser, Prime Minister of Ghana Kwame Nkrumah, President of Indonesia Sukarno, and President of Yugoslavia Josip Tito met at the United Nations in 1960 to lay the foundation for an international organization to help countries resist being drawn into the Cold War.

They created the **Non-Aligned Movement (NAM)** in order to support "the national independence, sovereignty, territorial integrity and security of non-aligned countries." Twenty-five countries attended the first NAM conference in Yugoslavia in September 1961. By the 1964 conference in Cairo, there were forty-seven members. Given that the leaders came from different continents and different political backgrounds, the organizational structure established for NAM was nonhierarchical, and no country held veto power over any other. Initially, NAM focused on supporting newly independent countries as they were decolonized. It was a political organization that offered assistance to all in the "struggle against imperialism, colonialism, neo-colonialism, racism, and all forms of foreign aggression, occupation, domination, interference, or hegemony, as well as against great power and bloc politics." In other words, NAM opposed everything the Cold War was.

Non-Aligned Movement (NAM)

a group of countries that sought independence from both the Soviet and U.S. spheres of influence during the Cold War

Conclusions

The process of decolonization was the final death toll of the imperial system that structured the world until the mid-twentieth century. And because decolonization took place in the midst of a Cold War rivalry with two superpowers vying for ideological (but really political and economic) control, the process was fraught with violence. The former colonists were nationalists—they sought independence from foreign domination—but the Cold War did not provide that opportunity any more than colonialism did.

The most violent example of how the Cold War affected decolonization was the civil war in Vietnam. The fifteen-year military conflict funded by the United States, the USSR and the PRC showed the countries of Asia, Africa and Latin America what decolonization could lead to during the competitive Cold War, and it certainly was not independence. So some political leaders

in new states sought other paths, including regional unity for economic strength and military regimes for internal stability. A handful of frustrated leaders created the Non-Aligned Movement to formally protest the way the superpowers treated the other countries of the world, and its membership increased steadily throughout the Cold War.

NAM's growth indicated that many countries would not willingly participate in the bipolar power struggle. The inability of the United States to win a conventional war in Vietnam and uphold its containment policy made the fear of nuclear war greater. And the USSR's willingness to fund any government that requested help stretched its communist economy far too thin. The Cold War was changing, and the superpowers would have to change their policies to keep up.

WORKING WITH THE THEMES

THE EFFECTS OF TECHNOLOGY Why wasn't the United States able to decisively defeat North Vietnam? How did the media and expanding communications affect the decision making of the parties involved in Vietnam?

CHANGING IDENTITIES Why did the United Nations take the lead role in decolonization? What was its goal for new countries? What do you think might be the long-term effects of "divide and rule" policies? Is Pan-Africanism a reasonable goal? Why or why not? How did U.S., Soviet and Chinese intervention in Vietnam affect the images of these countries around the world? Why the difference?

SHIFTING BORDERS What do you think was the greatest challenge to creating stable states in Africa in the 1950s through the 1970s? Why did the United States, the USSR and the PRC directly intervene in new Asian states but provide only covert aid (or none at all) to new African states?

GLOBALIZATION Explain the relationship between decolonization, the Cold War, and the Non-Aligned Movement. How did NAM attempt to restructure the Cold War framework of the international arena? Do you believe the "domino theory" was credible for Asia? What might be the long-term consequences for the United States in the Cold War if it consistently bases foreign policy decisions on the "domino theory"?

Further Reading

TO FIND OUT MORE

- U.S. Department of State/Office of the Historian: Foreign Relations of the United States Series. Available online at <http://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments>
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GO TO THE SOURCE

Dwight D. Eisenhower Presidential Library & Museum. Available online at http://www.eisenhower.archives.gov/research/online_documents.html

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MySearchLab Connections

 Read the **Document** on mysearchlab.com

- 9.1 *American Objectives in Southeast Asia.* Under President Truman, the U.S. adopted a foreign policy doctrine called “containment,” with a goal of confining communism and the Soviet Union to their existing boundaries. This doctrine led directly to the Vietnam War, in which the United States fought to prevent communist forces from attaining power in Southeast Asia.
- 9.2 “*The Final Declaration on Indochina.*” The Geneva Conference (April 26–July 20, 1954) brought together the U.S.S.R., the U.S., France, Great Britain, and the People’s Republic of China to discuss the unification of Korea and how to restore peace in Indochina, where the Vietnamese under Ho Chi Minh had just won a war of independence from France.
- 9.3 *Ho Chi Minh on Self Determination.* Ho Chi Minh led the Vietnamese people in their struggles against European colonialism and then American military power. Here he discusses the impact of the 1954 Geneva Conference.
- 9.4 Lyndon B. Johnson, *The Tonkin Gulf Resolution.* In August 1964, U.S. naval vessels were confronted by North Vietnamese torpedo boats in the Gulf of Tonkin. The incident was used by President Johnson as justification for authorizing military force in Southeast Asia.
- 9.5 *Lyndon B. Johnson’s Address to the Nation.* On March 31, 1968, President Johnson went on national television to announce new steps to limit the Vietnam War, and also, that he would not seek re-election at the end of the year.
- 9.6 Richard M. Nixon, *Vietnamization.* By 1969, President Nixon realized that the Vietnam War had drained American resources and prestige, and devastated morale at home. This speech outlined his plan for an honorable way out of the conflict—by reducing U.S. combat troops and strengthening the South Vietnamese armed forces so that they could be responsible for their own defense.

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- 9.1 *Creating Apartheid in South Africa*
- 9.2 Newsreel: *Peace March, Thousands Oppose Vietnam War*
- 9.3 *The Tet Offensive*