

Nifty 50s 1950-1959  
Foreign Policy and the Cold War  
Cold Warrior Talk

INDEPENDENT ACTIVITY.....DUE NO LATER THAN MAY 9<sup>TH</sup>

- This activity will be completed by one person.
- Read; *Unit 2 Student Background Sheets*: ( pages 26-29 available on line or see Mr. Fortier for a hard copy).
- After reading the *Unit 2 Student Background Sheets* complete a hard copy of the *Unit 2 Worksheet 1 ....Cold Warrior Talk*.
- You need not respond with complete sentences. If you need more space, attach a separate sheet.
- Scroll down to see the reading and the worksheet.

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

Unit 2

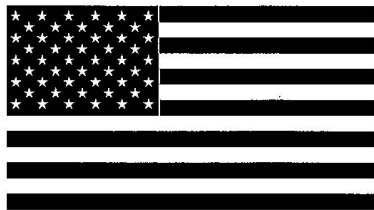
STUDENT BACKGROUND SHEET

## Foreign Policy and the Cold War

### The Cold War Begins

When World War II ended, the United States and the U.S.S.R. had become the world's most powerful nations.

The United States wanted countries around the world to become or remain democratic.



The Soviet Union wanted the world's nations to become communist.



The two superpowers confronted each other in trouble spots around the world. But they didn't get into a direct military fight with each other. For this reason, their struggle against each other was called the **Cold War**. From the 1950s into the early 1990s, the Cold War dominated global politics.

The problem began as World War II came to a close. Germany had invaded the Soviet Union twice within 20 years. Stalin, the Soviet

dictator didn't want this to happen again. He decided to create a buffer zone between the U.S.S.R. and Germany. The buffer zone would be filled with

Soviet-dominated countries. So the U.S.S.R. made the nations of Eastern Europe into Soviet satellites. That is, they were still separate nations. But their leaders said and did whatever the Soviet Union wanted them to say and do. Winston Churchill, Britain's



Joseph Stalin

prime minister, said an iron curtain had fallen across Europe. The "curtain" separated East from West.

U.S. and Allied leaders were alarmed at the way Stalin had taken control of Eastern Europe. They thought the Soviets would try to do the same thing in other parts of the world. The Soviets were suspicious of Western intentions. Tensions grew. In 1947, Communists tried to take over the Greek government. President Truman responded with a new policy that came to be known as the Truman Doctrine. It said that the United States would help any countries that faced a threat by Communists. Truman sent military aid to Greece, and the Communist rebellion ended.

The Truman Doctrine was an expression of the U.S. policy of containment. The aim of Truman's foreign policy was to contain the spread of Communism wherever in the world it threatened. Containment took several forms in Europe.

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## Foreign Policy and the Cold War *(continued)*

- The U.S. Marshall Plan provided massive aid to Western European countries. These nations could now rebuild their shattered economies.
- The Allies set up an airlift when the Soviets cut off all land access to West Berlin in 1948.
- The United States and Western European nations formed a military alliance called NATO (North Atlantic Treaty Organization) in 1949. (The Soviets responded with the Warsaw Pact, an Eastern European military alliance.)

### The Korean War

The Cold War turned hot in the Asian country of Korea. The country was divided into two separate nations, communist North Korea and democratic South Korea. In 1950, a North Korean army invaded the South. The United States led a United Nations force that pushed the North Koreans back. The U.S./U.N. army got near the border between North Korea and China. Then communist Chinese armies suddenly invaded and pushed the U.S./U.N. forces back to South Korea. The war ended without a significant change in the border between North and South Korea. A formal peace treaty was never signed. But Communism had been "contained" to North Korea.

### The Cold War and President Eisenhower

Dwight Eisenhower had been a World War II commander. He was elected U.S. president in 1952. He made some changes in U.S. Cold War policies. The United States would no longer

simply react to contain Communist aggression once it occurred. Instead, the U.S. threatened "massive retaliation." That is, it would use nuclear weapons as a response to any aggressive moves by Communists. Soon the Soviets had their own nuclear weapons. Then the two countries were in a state of nuclear deterrence.



Dwight D. Eisenhower

Neither could afford a first strike, because the other could strike back and both would be destroyed. This mutual threat of annihilation made most American and Soviet citizens very uneasy throughout the 1950s and beyond.

Cold War tensions continued on a smaller scale throughout the world.

- In Indochina, Communists led by Ho Chi Minh defeated French colonial rulers.
- In the Middle East, Arabs and Israelis fought wars. The United States supported Israel in the conflicts.
- In 1956, President Nasser of Egypt seized the Suez Canal. The U.S. sided with him against France, Britain, and Israel.

The Suez incident led to the U.S. president's announcement of the Eisenhower Doctrine. It said that the United States would use armed force against Communist aggression anywhere in the Middle East. It was another expression of the containment policy.

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## Foreign Policy and the Cold War *(continued)*

### **"Peaceful Coexistence"**

In the mid-1950s U.S. and Soviet attitudes softened somewhat. The Soviet Union had not taken over more of the world. But neither had the U.S. pushed it back. In fact, the United States did nothing when the U.S.S.R. crushed a rebellion in Hungary. The deadly possibility of a worldwide nuclear war held both superpowers back. The new Soviet leader was Nikita Khrushchev. He expressed this new stance when he spoke of "peaceful coexistence." Both East and West, he said, could exist side by side in the world without war.

"Peaceful coexistence" didn't mean real peace. U.S.-U.S.S.R. relations were very poor at times during the later 1950s and the 1960s. The U.S.S.R. shot down a U.S. spy plane in 1960. The Soviets then canceled a summit meeting between Eisenhower and Khrushchev. In 1962, the U.S. discovered that the Soviets had set up nuclear missiles in Cuba. These missiles could reach most of the United States. President Kennedy demanded that the Soviets remove the missiles. A naval battle loomed. The world teetered on the edge of nuclear war. Then Khrushchev agreed to Kennedy's demand. War was averted.

### **The Vietnam War**

The most deadly conflict of the Cold War was the war in Vietnam. U.S. policymakers developed a "domino theory" about Southeast Asia. If one country in the region fell to the Communists, the theory went, all the rest would go too. They would go down just like a row of falling dominoes. Other foreign policy experts had warned that it would be impossible for U.S.

forces to win a land war in Asia. The domino theory overcame these warnings.

The U.S. involvement in Vietnam began in a small way and kept increasing.

- President Truman had given military and economic aid to the French in their fight against the Communist Vietminh. Eisenhower continued the aid.

Vietnam became divided. The Communist North was headed by Ho Chi Minh. The anti-Communist South was led by Ngo Dinh Diem. Communist guerrillas called Viet Cong were supported by North Vietnam. They began fighting Diem's troops.

- President Eisenhower sent military supplies and a few military "advisers" to Vietnam. They were to help train the South Vietnamese army.

As the Viet Cong grew stronger, American aid grew larger.

- President Kennedy increased the number of U.S. troops in Vietnam to 16,000. President Johnson sent more.



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*Focus on U.S. History: The Era of  
World War II Through Contemporary Times*

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

## Cold Warrior Talk

**Directions:** The Cold War created some new terminology. Explain the meaning of each term listed below.

1. Cold War

6. containment

2. superpowers

7. massive retaliation

3. mutual assured destruction

8. brinkmanship

4. nuclear deterrence

9. domino theory



Explosion of atomic bomb

5. iron curtain

10. peaceful coexistence

