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Date _____

Unit 2

STUDENT BACKGROUND SHEET

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.

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.



Dwight D. Eisenhower

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