

# CHRONOLOGY OF THE COLD WAR

## World War II

- ☛ 1943—U.S. and U.K. don't include Soviets in plans for the occupation of Italy
- ☛ Russia resents Anglo allies delay in establishing a 2<sup>nd</sup> front
- ☛ U.S. cancels lend lease after the war, & buries Soviet request for a 6 billion dollar loan
- ☛ After Potsdam conference, Allied Control Commission members can't agree on administration of Germany

## 1946-1949

- ☛ 1946—Churchill said that an iron curtain has descended across the continent

### **Yugoslavia**

- The only Eastern European country that was not occupied by Soviet troops during WWII was Yugoslavia, which defeated the Nazi under its own leader, Marshall Tito.
- Because Soviet troops never occupied Yugoslavia, Tito was able to keep his independence from the USSR.
- Yugoslavia was a combination of many different ethnic groups and nationalities, so it was hard to hold it together in a cohesive unit. Tito did this through his strong personality and dictatorship.
- Tito of Yugoslavia is expelled from Comintern (International Communist Organ. Led by USSR).
- When he died in the 1970s, Yugoslavia was ruled by a series of weak rulers.
- When communism in Eastern Europe collapsed in the late 1980s, Yugoslavia fragmented and was torn apart by civil war.
- ☛ 1947—Truman Doctrine—communist pressure mounting against Greece & Turkey, Great Britain is pulling out
  - U.S. sent military & economic aid. \$400 million over next 15 months
- ☛ Containment—Not entering Soviet's spheres of influence, but to prevent spread of communism.
- ☛ June 1947—Marshall Plan—economic assistance to Europe to help all war torn countries recover from the war.
  - Russians denounce the plan as American economic imperialism and pull out.
  - Soviets form COMECON to give economic aid to their allies.
- ☛ 1948—coup in Czechoslovakia—a coalition of non-communists & communists fell apart and new government is communist; no elections, no non-communists.
- ☛ 1949—Mao Zedong wins China for communists and Chiang (nationalists) flees to Taiwan.
- ☛ 1949—Soviet Union explodes their own atomic bomb.
- ☛ 1948-1949—Berlin Airlift—11 months
- ☛ NATO—Western Europe and U.S. enter a regional defense association. Soviet's counter with the Warsaw Pact.

## 1950s

- ☛ **Korean War**—globalization of containment
  - A war of limited objectives, a police action, not a declared war.
  - Korea was outside U.S. defense perimeters so North Koreans risk the attack.
  - Represents the way the Cold War was fought—clashes on the periphery, not one between major powers.
  - Results—no settlement or compromises with the Soviets; war ended with the settlement back at the 38<sup>th</sup> parallel
- ☛ 1950-1954—McCarthyism; U.S. actively counters communism ("Red Scare")
- ☛ Vietnam—French lose Indochina to Vietnamese and Ho Chi Minh, Geneva accords divide the country at 17<sup>th</sup> parallel, Americans support South Vietnamese government
- ☛ CIA activates in Iran and Guatemala
- ☛ 1956—Destalinization—Stalin died and Khrushchev denounced Stalin for killing his people
  - Destroyed monuments & reburied him outside of Kremlin walls
- ☛ 1956—Hungarian Revolt—Hungarian freedom fighters attempt to bring democracy to Hungary and break with Soviets but are crushed by the Russians. The West does not interfere.
- ☛ 1956—Suez Canal—U.S. withdraws aid to Nassar after sale of cotton to Soviets for arms. Nassar nationalizes Suez. Britain, France, and Israel invade. U.S. backs UN resolution condemning her allies. Cease fire, UN peacekeeping forces sent. U.S. fears Soviets are expanding into the Middle East, containment policy extended to Middle East—Eisenhower Doctrine.
- ☛ Brinkmanship = willingness to go to the brink or edge of war
- ☛ 1957—Sputnik put into space by USSR. Cold War extended to space, Americans shocked; could they be ahead in the arms race too?
- ☛ 1959—face to face meetings between Eisenhower and Khrushchev; peaceful coexistence

## **1960s and 1970s**

- 1960—U2 Incident— (U2 = secret, high altitude spy planes that the U.S. flew over USSR)
  - May 1960 Soviets shot down U-2 plane & captured pilot; held him for 10 months
  - brought mistrust & tension b/w superpowers
- Kennedy wants more options and flexibility in military, increased spending, creation of Green Berets
- Alliance for Progress—economic aid program for Latin America stressing democratic and economic reforms to prevent communism
- U.S. gets deeper involved in Vietnam; troops expand to 17,000 and we support anti-communist faction in Laos
- 1961—Berlin Wall built
- Oct. 1962—Cuban Missile Crisis—Khrushchev secretly built 42 missile sites in Cuba
  - Kennedy demanded they be removed (fear of WWII)
  - Khrushchev agreed to remove the missiles
- Vietnam
  - 1968—over 500,000 U.S. troops in Vietnam—began withdrawing U.S. troops
  - 1973—U.S. negotiated end to its involvement in conflict
  - 1975—gov. in South fell & all of Vietnam communist
- Détente—policy of lessened Cold War tensions (during Nixon)
- 1972—Weapons reduction talks: START and SALT (Strategic Arms Limitation Talks)
- 1973—Peaceful Coexistence—stagnate period in Cold War

## **1980s and early 1990s—Collapse of Communism in Eastern Europe**

- 1985—Gorbachev obtained power, he decided that the USSR could no longer afford to maintain shaky communist governments in Eastern Europe and announced that he would not use the Soviet military for that purpose.
- 1988-1989—Poland—Solidarity group leads in fall of communism
- 1988—Hungary lifts restrictions on foreign travel.
  - Demonstrations for democracy and civil rights
  - 1989—multi-party system
- November 1989—fall of Berlin Wall
- 1990—East Germany—reunited with West Germany
- The collapse of communism in Eastern Europe followed this general pattern:
  - Strict communist government
  - Younger, more modern communist government
  - New, non-communist government
  - Threat of return to conservatism
  - Strengthening of non-communist government
- 1992—Czechoslovakia—split into 2 countries
- 1992—Albania—last to fall—1<sup>st</sup> time non-communist leader since WWII

## **Collapse of USSR**

- Gorbachev's realization that things couldn't continue as they were led him to start two new policies: glasnost and perestroika.
- Glasnost refers to intellectual openness, and perestroika refers to economic restructuring.
- These programs created two groups of discontented people.
  - The first group thought that change was coming too slowly.
  - The second group thought there was too much change. Members of this second group attempted to overthrow the government but were unsuccessful.
- Gorbachev and the Soviet government lost their authority and power and respect.
- Gorbachev had agreed to a new constitution that eliminated the Soviet Union.
- 1991—The individual states that had made up the Soviet Union became independent.

## **Future Problems for newly Non-Communist Countries**

- Price problems—no longer kept artificially low
- Reduction of social benefits
- Employment changes
- Problems with establishing democratic governments without democratic traditions
- Nationalism—too many different nationalities in a nation