

The Cold War

Postwar United States
(1945–1975)



Two superpowers

A global battlefield

The war heats up

Thematic Icons



Economics and business



Geography and environment



Historical concepts and questions



Politics, government and citizenship



Society and culture



War, diplomacy and foreign policy

Icons: For more detailed instructions, see the *User Guide*



Flash activity (these activities are not editable)



Teacher notes included in the Notes page



By the end of this section, you will learn about the expansion of the Cold War across battlefields around the world:

- The Cold War in Europe
- The Cold War in Asia
- Changing policies under Eisenhower
- McCarthyism and the Cold War at home.



After World War II, Stalin was determined to keep Germany weak in order to prevent future invasions of the Soviet Union.

This policy brought him into conflict with the other Allies in 1948, resulting in the **Berlin Blockade**, solved by the **Berlin Airlift**.

Watch this animation to find out about it.

Press **start** to begin.

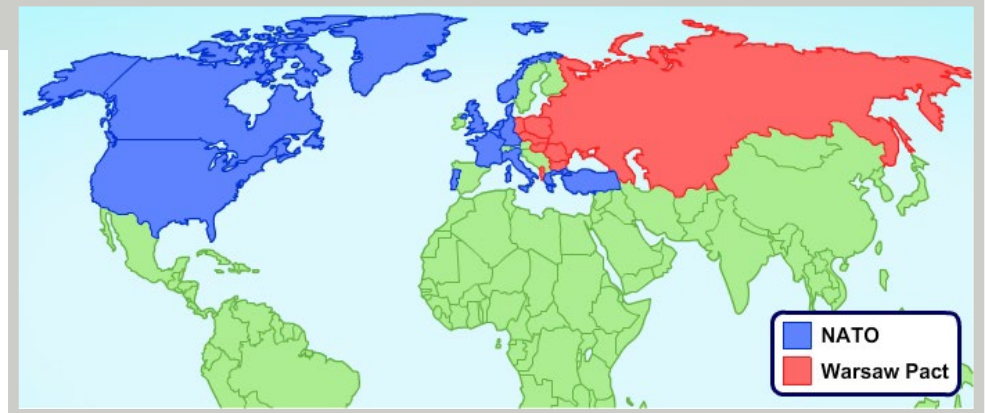
start



The crisis in Berlin accelerated the U.S. commitment to the policy of containment. It joined an alliance of the Western European nations in April 1949. This was the **North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO)**.

Security was achieved by agreeing that an attack against any one member would be viewed as an attack against all members of the alliance.

This was clearly directed against the Soviet threat to West Germany. The F.R.G. became a member in 1955.



The Soviet Union responded to West Germany joining NATO with the 1955 Warsaw Pact. What was this?



The Warsaw Pact



There were several reasons for the Soviet Union's creation of the **Warsaw Pact** in response to West Germany joining NATO. Decide on the importance of the reasons and drag the statements into the order of your choice, with the most important reason at the top. You should justify your answers.

Press **start** to begin.

start





As the U.S. struggled with containing the spread of Soviet communism in Europe, they were faced with problematic developments in several Asian countries.

In the last months of the World War II, troops from both the U.S. and the Soviet Union occupied parts of Korea. As tension between them grew, they both refused to leave and Korea was divided, supposedly temporarily, along the **38th parallel**.



Meanwhile, postwar China descended into a brutal civil war between the nationalist government of **Chiang Kai-shek** and the Chinese communist forces headed by **Mao Zedong**.





China becomes communist



Chiang's nationalist government was corrupt, incompetent and lacked widespread popular support. He was an American ally but, despite heavy pressure to do so, Truman refused to do more than send money and weapons as aid.



Mao and the communists won over most of the peasants and ultimately won the war in 1949. They established the People's Republic of China.



Chiang fled the mainland to Taiwan and established a government in exile, protected by America. Containment had failed, which shocked and panicked the American public.





The **Korean War** was the first significant military conflict of the Cold War. North Korea, backed by China and the Soviet Union, and South Korea, backed by the UN, fought from 1950 to 1953. Watch this animation to find out about the causes and course of the war.

Press **start** to begin.

start



Was the Korean War a victory for the U.S.?



Elected in 1952, President **Dwight D. Eisenhower** inherited a nation in the midst of an anti-communist hysteria and a world clouded by the threat of nuclear war.

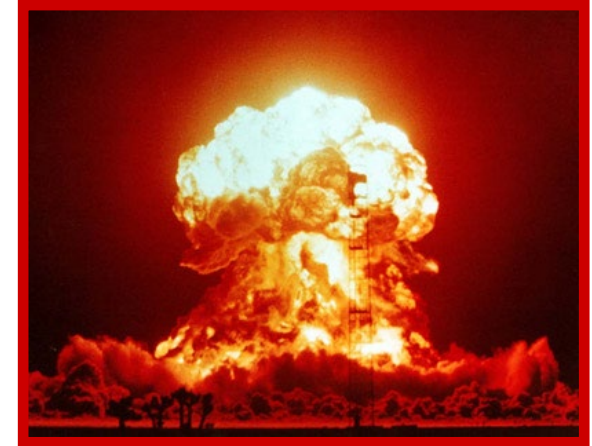
Eisenhower appointed John Foster Dulles as Secretary of State. Dulles rejected containment as being too passive in dealing with the communist threat.

Instead, the U.S. declared it would respond, not with conventional forces but with the full force of the U.S. nuclear arsenal. This doctrine of **massive retaliation** would act as a deterrent to Soviet expansion.





Under Eisenhower, the U.S. adopted the tactic of **brinksmanship**. This was deliberately confronting the Soviet Union and pushing it to the brink of war in order to obtain concessions.



Massive retaliation provided the basis for the **mutually assured destruction (MAD)** principle. This stated that unless you could destroy the other side's capacity to retaliate in a **first strike**, then neither side could risk starting a war. Both sides recognized this, so it helped to maintain the peace.

How does the cartoon portray the Cold War?



At the end of the 1950s, there was an easing of tensions in the Cold War. However, this all changed when a U-2 spy plane was shot down over the Soviet Union in 1960.

Read this passage about the incident and select the correct word to fill each blank.

Press **start** to begin.

start



Do you think the two leaders really wanted peace?



In the U.S., a variety of factors combined to create an intense fear that communism had infiltrated American society and was on the verge of taking control. These factors included:

- the Soviets having nuclear weapons
- China becoming communist
- the Korean War
- the **Alger Hiss** case
- the Rosenberg spy trial.

A virtual hysteria gripped the country, resulting in widespread fear and extreme constitutional abuses.





During the early Cold War era, the U.S. was gripped by a deep-rooted anti-communism and fear that communists had infiltrated every aspect of American life. Press on the buttons to find out more about key people, events and organizations involved in the anti-communist hysteria.

Press **start** to begin.

start





Washington Express

McCarthy's downfall

Senator Joseph McCarthy last night saw a further drop in his popularity. Another night of wild accusations and intimidating witnesses, this time on television's *See It Now*, exposed the man as the bully he is. Thank goodness for Edward R. Murrow, the journalist who stood up to McCarthy and stood up for decency and human dignity. After his wild allegations against the U.S. Army, the Wisconsin Senator's days as a national scourge were numbered. Last night's fiasco was another nail in the coffin as his support tumbled.

April 7, 1954



Photo: Caitlin Lonning

Report: Joseph C.
Mangiaracina
Continued on p. 3

Do you think McCarthyism was justified?