Chapter 28

The Onset of the Cold War
Origins of the Cold War

There are now two great nations in the world, which starting from different points, seem to be advancing toward the same goal: the Russians and the Anglo-Americans. . . . Each seems called by some secret design of Providence one day to hold in its hands the destinies of half the world.

— Alexis de Tocqueville, Democracy in America (1835)

THEY made it, of course; they drew the iron curtain across the middle of Europe, partly to stop us looking in, partly to stop their own poor wretches looking out enviously at the boundless goods and comforts on our side. Behind the iron curtain were the hapless peoples held captive by the grim-faced Russians and their stooges in office in the satellites; in front of it were ourselves, expressing sympathy for the captives but apologetically remaining very thoroughly armed, in however subdued a way.

— Fred Inglis, The Cruel Peace: Everyday Life and the Cold War (1991)
A Power Vacuum

- World War II left a power vacuum in Europe.
  - Previously, Britain, France, and Germany had not only been Europe's leaders, but world powers.
  - Their weakness after 1945 left them subordinate to the United States and Soviet Union.

- The continent became an arena for the rivalries of the two superpowers.

- The two sides played out their hostilities in all measures short of actual fighting—hence the term Cold War.

- It became clear that the United Nations would not solve the world's problems.
Development of the Cold War

- The Cold War (1945-91) was one of perception where neither side fully understood the intentions and ambitions of the other, leading to mistrust and military build-ups.

- United States
  - U.S. thought that Soviet expansion would continue and spread throughout the world.
  - They saw the Soviet Union as a threat to their way of life; especially after the Soviet Union gained control of Eastern Europe.
Development of the Cold War

- **Soviet Union**
  - They felt that they had won World War II. They had sacrificed the most (25 million vs. 300,000 total dead) and deserved the “spoils of war.” They had lost land after WWI because they left the winning side; now they wanted to gain land because they had won.
  - They wanted to economically raid Eastern Europe to recoup their expenses during the war.
  - They saw the U.S. as a threat to their way of life; especially after the U.S. development of atomic weapons.
Cold War Mobilization by the U.S.

- Alarmed Americans viewed the Soviet occupation of eastern European countries as part of a communist expansion, which threatened to extend to the rest of the world.

- In 1946, Winston Churchill gave a speech at Fulton College in Missouri in which he proclaimed that an “Iron Curtain” had fallen across Europe.

  \[... from Stettin on the Baltic to Trieste on the Adriatic, an iron curtain has descended across the continent. Behind that line lie all the capitals of the ancient states of central and eastern Europe -- Warsaw, Berlin, Prague, Vienna, Budapest, Belgrade, Bucharest and Sofia. From what I have seen of our Russian friends and allies during the war I am convinced that there is nothing they admire so much as strength and nothing for which they have less respect than military weakness.\]

- In March 1947, U.S. president Harry Truman proclaimed the Truman Doctrine.
The Truman Doctrine (1947)

- **Reasoning**
  - Threatened by Communist influence in Turkey and Greece
  - “Two hostile camps” speech

- **Financial aid** “to support free peoples resisting attempted subjugation”

- Sent $400 million worth of war supplies to Greece and helped push out Communism

- The Truman Doctrine marked a new level of American commitment to a Cold War.
The Policy of Containment

- **Definition:**
  - By applying firm diplomatic, economic, and military counter-pressure, the United States could block Soviet aggression.

- Formulated by George F. Kennan as a way to stop Soviet expansion without having to go to war.

- Ironically, the Soviets were looking for insulation from the Capitalist West.
The Marshall Plan (1947-48)

- War damage and dislocation in Europe invited Communist influence
- Economic aid to all European countries offered in the European Recovery Program
- $17 billion to western Europe
- Soviets refused – The blame for dividing Europe fell on the Soviet union, not the United States. And the Marshall Plan proved crucial to Western Europe’s economic recovery.

ERP Expenditures
Dividing Germany

- U.S., Britain, and France merged their zones in 1948 to create an independent West German state.
- The Soviets responded by blockading land access to Berlin.
- The U.S. began a massive airlift of supplies that lasted almost a year. (7,000 tons a day)

- In May 1949 Stalin lifted the blockade, conceding that he could not prevent the creation of West Germany.
- Thus, the creation of East and West Germany

Berliners watching a C-54 land at Tempelhof Airport (1948)
The Eastern Bloc

Annexed by the Soviet Union
- Eastern Finland
- Estonia
- Latvia
- Lithuania
- Memel
- East Prussia
- West Belarus
- Western Ukraine
- Moldavia
- Uzbekistan
- Kazakhstan
- Azerbaijan
- Georgia
- Tajikistan
- Tuva
- Kirgizstan
- Turkmenistan
- Armenia

Soviet Allies
- People’s Republic of Hungary
- People’s Republic of Poland
- Czechoslovak Socialist Republic
- Romanian People’s Republic
- East Germany
- People’s Republic of Albania
- People’s Republic of Bulgaria
- Federal People’s Republic of Yugoslavia
North Atlantic Treaty Organization & the Warsaw Pact

- Stalin’s aggressive actions accelerated the American effort to use military means to contain Soviet ambitions.

- The U.S. joined with Canada, Britain, France, Belgium, the Netherlands, and Luxembourg to establish **NATO**, a mutual defense pact in 1949.

- Pledged signers to treat an attack against one as an attack against all.

- When West Germany joined NATO in 1955, the Soviet Union countered by creating its own alliance system in eastern Europe— the **Warsaw Pact** (1955)
The Military Dimension

- **1947**: National Security Act
  - Department of Defense unified armed forces
  - Central Intelligence Agency coordinated intelligence-gathering
  - National Security Council advised president

- Defense budget devoted to air power

- **1949**: First Russian atomic bomb exploded, U.S. began hydrogen bomb development
The Containment Doctrine would later be expanded in 1949 in NSC-68, which called for the following measures deemed necessary in fighting the Cold War:

- Quadruple U.S. defense spending from $13 billion to $50 billion a year, to be paid for with a large tax increase.
- Form alliances with non-Communist countries around the world
- Convince the American public that a costly arms buildup was imperative for the nation’s defense.

NSC-68 served as the framework for American policy over the next 20 years.
The Cold War Heats Up: Problems of the Atomic Age

- The most frightening aspect of the Cold War was the constant threat of nuclear war.
  - Russia detonated its first atom bomb in 1949.
  - Truman ordered construction of the hydrogen bomb.

- Call for buildup of conventional forces to provide alternative to nuclear war.
Global Nuclear Confrontation

- The Soviet army had at its command over 260 divisions.
- The United States, in contrast, had reduced its forces by 1947 to little more than a single division.
  - American military planners were forced to adopt a nuclear strategy in face of the overwhelmingly superiority of Soviet forces.
  - They would deter any Soviet attack by setting in place a devastating atomic counterattack.
- For the next quarter century, the U.S. and the USSR would engage in a nuclear arms race that constantly increased the destructive capability of both sides.
“Losing China”

- Truman was preoccupied with Europe.
- Events in Asia would soon bring charges from Republicans that the Democrats were letting the Communists win.
- After “losing” China, the United States sought to shore up friendly Asian regimes.
3 The Korean War (1950-53)

- Since World War II the country had been divided along the 38th parallel
  - The North was controlled by the Communist government of Kim Il Sung
  - The South by the dictatorship of Syngman Rhee.
The Korean War (1950-53)

- Soviet-backed troops from North Korea invaded U.S.-backed South Korea in June 1950.
- The confrontation between capitalist and Communist blocs turned into open military struggle.
The Korean War (1950-53)

- Stalin had agreed to the North Korean attack, but promised only supplies.
  - He would eventually send pilots dressed in Chinese uniforms and using Chinese phrases over the radio

- Having already “lost” China, it was decided that the United States would fight the North Koreans.
  - It would use enough force to deter aggression, but without provoking a larger war with the Soviet Union or China.
  - The U.S. would not declare war. The United Nations sanctioned aid to South Korea as a “police action.”
The Korean War (1950-53)

- The U.N. Security Council declared North Korea the aggressor and sent troops from 15 nations to restore peace.
  - Under the command of General Douglas MacArthur
  - U.S. 350,000; South Korean 400,000; other UN members 50,000
  - The move succeeded only because the Soviet delegate, who had veto power, was absent because he was protesting the UN’s refusal to recognize the Communist government in China.
Side effects of the Korean War

- Energized America’s anti-Communist commitments
  - No longer did elected officials hesitate about the need to contain Soviet communism at any cost.

- NATO forces were rapidly expanding.
  - By 1952, there were 261,000 American troops stationed in Europe, three times the number in 1950.
  - By 1953, NATO forces had reached 7 million.

- Truman also increased assistance to the French in Indochina, creating the Military Assistance Advisory Group for Indochina.
  - This was the start of America’s deepening involvement in Vietnam.
Military Developments

- MacArthur pushed the North Koreans back to the 38th Parallel.
  - He then decided to invade the North in an effort to unify Korea.
  - Chinese Communist “volunteers” entered the war and pushed U.S. back.
Map of the Korean War
Dismissal of MacArthur

- MacArthur wanted to blockade China and use Taiwanese Nationalists to invade mainland China.
  - He ordered China to make peace or be attacked.
- Truman removed MacArthur from all his commands and replaced him with General Matthew Ridgway who gradually pushed back almost to original line.
End of War

- Snags in negotiations.
- Truce talks lasted for two years.
- Truce signed on July 27, 1953
- Cost of the war
  - U.S. – 33,000 deaths & 103,000 wounded and missing.
  - S. Korean – 1 million
  - N. Korean and Chinese - about 1.5 million
Possible Easing of Cold War Tensions

- Armistice in Koreas, the death of Stalin, and a summit in Geneva over nuclear weapons and Germany seem to indicate an easing of the Cold War.

- Geneva meeting provides little agreement and the Cold War soon resumes.
The Cold War at Home

- New Deal economic policies undermined
  - Consumerism and unprecedented prosperity
  - GI Bill – Servicemen’s Readjustment Act of 1944
  - Baby Boom
  - Suburban Growth
  - Rise of Sunbelt

- Fears of Communist subversion

- Republicans used anticommunism to revive their party
Truman’s Economic Program & Civil Rights

- **Employment Act of 1946**
  - Council of Economic Advisers established to council the President & Congress

- **Civil Rights** – Truman used executive powers to:
  - Establish Committee on Civil Rights (1948)
  - Strengthen civil rights division of the Justice Department, aiding efforts of black leaders to end segregation in schools
  - Ordered racial discrimination in departments of federal government and all three branches of armed forces (1948)

- **Twenty-second Amendment** (ratified by states in 1951) limits the president to two terms in office
Truman’s Troubles

- Obstacles to Truman’s Fair Deal reforms:
  - Apathetic public
  - Inflation
  - Labor unrest

- 1946: Republicans win Congress
Truman Vindicated

- **Taft-Hartley Act** outlawed certain union tactics
  - Truman vetoed, Republicans overrode his veto
- **1948 election**: Truman thought unelectable
  - Northern liberals supported Henry Wallace’s Progressive candidacy
  - Southern Democrats supported “Dixiecrat” Strom Thurmond
  - Republican Thomas Dewey overconfident and ran bland campaign, failed to challenge Truman on Cold War because of the Berlin Crisis
  - Roosevelt coalition reelected Truman on domestic issues
Election of 1948

Electoral Vote by State

**DEMOCRATIC**
Harry S Truman  303  24,105,695

**REPUBLICAN**
Thomas E. Dewey  189  21,969,170

**STATES' RIGHTS**
Strom Thurmond  39  1,169,021

**MINOR PARTIES**
Henry Wallace et al.  531  1,296,898

**Total**  531  48,537,784
The Loyalty Issue

- House Un-American Activities Committee investigated Communist subversion in government

- Truman responded with loyalty program
  - Smith Act and *Dennis et. al. v. United States* (1951)
  - McCarran Internal Security Act

- Espionage Cases
  - Alger Hiss case
  - Rosenberg case

- Democrats blamed for:
  - “Losing” China to Communism
  - Russia’s development of a hydrogen bomb
McCarthyism in Action

- 1950: Senator Joseph McCarthy launched anticommunist campaign
- Innocent overwhelmed by accusations
- Attacks on privileged bureaucrats
  - Supported by Midwest Republicans
  - Attracted Irish, Italian, Polish workers to Republicans
The Republicans in Power

- 1952: Eisenhower captures White House for Republican Party
- July 27, 1953: stalemate accepted in Korea
- Eisenhower deals passively with McCarthy
- 1954: Attack on Army discredits McCarthy, who is then censured

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<th>Candidate</th>
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The Cold War in the 1950s: U.S.

- Dwight Eisenhower takes over from Truman in 1953.
  - Democrats charged Republicans for “missile gap”
  - Eisenhower responded.
- Enlarged defense spending; National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA)
- By 1962-63, the U.S. had 450 missiles and 2,000 bombers capable at striking the Soviet Union, compared to 50-100 ICBMS and 200 bombers that could reach the U.S.
Eisenhower Wages the Cold War

- Eisenhower prefers to work behind the scenes
- Eisenhower wanted to relax tensions with Soviets
  - Debt imposed by defense spending
  - Possibility of atomic warfare
- Eisenhower’s “new look” policy relied on massive retaliation to deter Soviet attacks
France and Vietnam

- Communist, anti-colonial, and nationalistic Vietnam leader Ho Chi Minh declares Vietnam’s independence from France in 1945

- Civil war breaks out in 1947
  - The French are crushed at Dien Bien Phu
  - Peace accord in 1954 splits Vietnam in two
    - North Vietnam – Ho Chi Minh and the communists
    - South Vietnam – French controlled
Vietnam and the Cold War

- The United States, believing that North Vietnam was a puppet of the Soviet Union and the People’s Republic of China, form the **Southeast Asia Treaty Organization** (SEATO) to combat the communists.

- France withdraws from South Vietnam in 1955, leaving Vietnamese political groups to fight for its power.

- United States supports **Ngo Dinh Diem**, a strong anti-communist nationalist (but certainly not for democracy).
  
  - The **National Liberation Front** with its military wing the **Viet Cong** make it a goal to overthrow Diem.
  
  - Diem becomes more repressive.
  
  - In 1963, Diem is assassinated by an army coup, supported by the United States.
Containing China

- Tough line against China
- Drove wedge between China, Russia
- Strategy ultimately worked
- Effects not immediately apparent
Turmoil in the Middle East

- **The Suez Crisis** – Egyptian President **Gamal Abdel Nasser** goes to war with Israel and nationalizes the Suez Canal
  
  - The British and French intervene militarily, but the United States refuses to & pressures English, French withdrawal
  
  - The Soviet Union protests the military intervention, but also does not intervene
  
  - Result was Egypt maintains control of the canal, while the United States and Soviet Union show constraint in attempting to avoid war

Gamal Abdel Nasser
2nd President of Egypt
1st President of the United Arab Republic (UAR)
Turmoil in the Middle East

- In the *Eisenhower Doctrine*, the U.S. pledged economic and military aid to any Middle East country threatened by Communism

- 1958: Lebanon invited U.S. troops to maintain order
  - 14,000 Marines sent to prevent civil war between Christians and Muslims

- OPEC and oil
Covert Actions

- **Central Intelligence Agency (CIA)** used to achieve covert objectives
  - Iran: CIA restored the shah to power
  - Guatemala: CIA ousted leftist government
  - Eastern Europe: Refused to help East Germans or Hungarians
Waging Peace

- Nuclear test ban treaty
  - U.S. and U.S.S.R. agreed to suspend nuclear testing in the atmosphere
- October, 1957: Russians launched Sputnik
- May, 1960: U-2 incident cancelled plans for summit on new Berlin Crisis

A U-2 aircraft similar to the one shot down
The Cold War in the 1950s: USSR

- **Nikita Khrushchev** takes over after Stalin’s death in 1953.
  - He repudiates Stalin’s use of the vast Gulag (or labor camp complex) and attempts to separate Stalin’s “crimes” from true communism.

- Repression and Dissent
  - Polish and Hungarian intellectuals and students held demonstrations calling for free elections, withdrawal of Soviet troops, etc.
  - 1956 – Soviet Crackdown in Hungary
    - Soviet tanks were sent in to crush dissent.
  - Eastern Europe remained under Soviet control.
The Cold War in the 1950s: USSR

- October 4, 1957 – USSR launched the first satellite, Sputnik, into orbit.
  - The Sputnik launch confirmed the Soviet Union’s superpower status.
- Two months earlier they had tested an intercontinental ballistic missile (ICBM).
- Khrushchev – “We will bury you”
The Continuing Cold War

- January, 1961: Eisenhower warned against growing military-industrial complex
- Post-war era marked by Cold War rather than peace and tranquility