

SSUSH 20- Analyze the domestic and international impact of the Cold War on the United States

This standard measures your knowledge of the causes and effects of the Cold War. Following World War II, the United States and the other Allies divided Germany into four occupation zones. When the Soviet Union refused to join its zone with the French, British, and American zones and allow the German people to assume control of their government, the Cold War began. Over four decades, competition between the U.S. and the U.S.S.R. involved many other countries aligned with one of the two superpowers.

a. Describe the creation of the Marshall Plan, U.S. commitment to Europe, the Truman Doctrine, and the origins and implications of the containment policy.

Marshall Plan

The European Recovery Program, better known as the Marshall Plan for Secretary of State George Marshall, was America's main program for rebuilding Western Europe and opposing communism after World War II. The plan was put into action in July 1947 and operated for four years. During that time, the United States spent thirteen billion dollars on economic and technical assistance for the war-torn democratic European countries that had been nearly destroyed during World War II. The Marshall Plan offered the same aid to the Soviet Union and its allies if they would make political reforms and accept certain outside controls; however, the Soviets rejected this proposal.

Commitment to Europe

To halt the spread of communism to Western Europe from the Soviet-controlled nations of Eastern Europe, the United States formed the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) with many of the noncommunist nations in Europe, including former wartime allies Britain and France. In response, the Soviet Union created the Warsaw Pact, an alliance of the communist nations it controlled in Eastern Europe. Convinced the Soviets were attempting to establish a sphere of influence throughout the world, the United States viewed these actions as a direct threat to American security. This determination to stop the spread of communism is known as the policy of containment and was the basis for many U.S. foreign policy decisions during the Cold War.

Truman Doctrine

In 1947, President Harry S. Truman proclaimed the Truman Doctrine. It stated the United States would supply any nation with economic and military aid to prevent its falling under the Soviet sphere of influence. Truman called upon the United States to "support free peoples who are resisting attempted subjugation by armed minorities or by outside pressures." Although Truman never referred directly to the U.S.S.R., anyone who heard the declaration, including the Soviet leaders, knew the Soviets were the "outside pressures" Truman talked about.

b. Explain the impact of the new communist regime in China and the outbreak of the Korean War and how these events contributed to the rise of Senator Joseph McCarthy.

Korean War

In 1950, the United States and the democratic government of South Korea went to war against the communist government of North Korea. North Korea was being aided by the new Chinese communist government that had recently won the Chinese Civil War. Combat began when communist troops invaded South Korea. The United States sent its troops to force the communists back to North Korea and drove them across the border. The U.S. troops then followed the enemy into North Korea in an effort to eliminate communism from the Korean peninsula. When the Americans reached the border between North Korea and China, the Chinese attacked, forcing the Americans back to South Korea.

McCarthyism

Americans had an increased fear of communism after a communist regime took control of China in 1949 and the United States and South Korea went to war against North Korean communists who were being aided by China's new communist government. This spread of communism in Asia encouraged a desire among some Americans to stop communism from spreading to the United States. A series of "Red Scares," highlighted by Senator Joseph McCarthy's statements about alleged communist infiltration of the U.S. government and U.S. Army, led to civil rights violations of those who were communists, were suspected of being communists, or were suspected of knowing someone who might be a communist.

c. Describe the Cuban Revolution, the Bay of Pigs, and the Cuban missile crisis.

Cuba

In 1956, Fidel Castro led the Cuban Revolution. Castro became prime minister of Cuba early in 1957 and, at first, had American support. However, when he allied himself with the Soviet Union, suspended all elections, and named himself president for life, the United States turned against Castro. In 1961, 1,500 Cuban exiles armed and trained by the CIA tried to stage an invasion at Cuba's Bay of Pigs. The small force was crushed by Castro after President Kennedy refused to involve the U.S. Armed Forces. Twelve hundred of the invaders were captured, and the United States was forced to give fifty three million dollars' worth of food and supplies to Cuba for release of the captives. The Soviets believed that, because Kennedy refused to involve the American military in Cuban affairs, he would not interfere if the Soviets built military missile launch sites in Cuba, so they installed Soviet missiles. The Soviet plan was that Cuba could use these missiles to prevent another U.S.-planned invasion. When an American spy plane took photos of a Soviet nuclear missile site being built in Cuba, Kennedy immediately began planning a response. He completely blockaded Cuba and threatened to invade unless the Soviets promised to withdraw from Cuba. Finally the Soviets agreed to remove their missiles if the United States would remove its nuclear missiles installed near the Soviet Union in Turkey. The two nations removed their missiles in what is now known as the Cuban Missile Crisis.

d. Describe the Vietnam War, the Tet offensive and growing opposition to the war.

Vietnam War

The Vietnam War was a struggle for control of Vietnam. While the conflict originally began during the French colonial rule in the region, the United States became involved in the 1950s by providing economic and limited military aid. Then, in the early 1960s, U.S. involvement began to increase; it lasted until the early 1970s. The democratic government of South Vietnam, supported by the United States, battled communist North Vietnam and a military organization called the Viet Cong. U.S. policymakers believed that if Vietnam came to be ruled by a communist government, communism would spread throughout Southeast Asia and perhaps beyond. In 1968, the Viet Cong and North Vietnamese army started the eight-month-long Tet Offensive. It was the Viet Cong's largest and most damaging campaign of the entire war. Ultimately, the Tet Offensive failed to achieve its goal of driving the Americans out of Vietnam but it did lead many people in the United States to question how and why Johnson had told them America was winning the war. This led some Americans who had been quiet up until then to raise their voices in protest against the war. Many college campuses were home to groups formed to protest American involvement in Vietnam. The goals of these groups differed, but most favored ending the draft and removing all American troops from Vietnam.

e. Explain the role of geography on the US containment policy, the Korean War, the Bay of Pigs, the Cuban Missile Crisis, and the Vietnam War.