Chapter 25
Cold War America, 1945-1963
Containment in a Divided World

• The Cold War began at the close of WW2 in 1945 and ended in 1991.

The Cold War in Europe, 1945-1946

Yalta

• Yalta Conference the “Big Three” met to reconcile Wilsonian principles.

• United Nations

• British-American strategy for reshaping Soviet border with Poland and buffer of “client states” to avoid future invasions

• Democratic self-determination was ignored in Eastern Europe (Communist bloc)= precipitating event of the Cold War

Truman Steps In

• Inexperienced and tough talker, berated Soviet foreign minister for failure to honor the Yalta agreements

• He raised Cold War tensions when he failed to reveal the atomic bomb’s existence (Stalin knew)
Germany
• Rebuilding Germany was a priority. Why?
• Divided into four zones
• Stalin wanted reparations (not German revival) and a protective barrier of client states in Eastern Europe
• Stalin agreed with England, U.S., and France, which sharpened his resentment with the West

The Containment Strategy
• Soviet Union stationed troops in Iran, and pressured Turkey for access to the Mediterranean, and supported Communist forces in Greece.
  • U.S. response-

Toward an Uneasy Peace
• U.S. diplomat, George Kennan’s “Long Telegram” endorsed American “containment”. It would threaten a peaceful and stable world.
• Soviet perspective on the U.S.-
• Truman Doctrine-
  • Hundreds of millions of dollars to aid Greece and Turkey
• Marshall Plan-
East and West in the New Europe

- Western Germany was consolidated to establish an independent republic in 1947 (West and East Germany officially became states in 1949)
- Effect: Stalin blockaded all Allied traffic to West Berlin
- The Berlin Airlift lasted 321 days. Soviets finally conceded due to failure of the blockade.
- NATO (North Atlantic Treaty Organization) 1949-
- Warsaw Pact 1955-
Nuclear Diplomacy

• In 1949 the Soviet Union effectively tested their atomic bomb

• In 1950 the National Security Council (NSC) pushed to develop a hydrogen bomb, _____ times more destructive than the bombs dropped on Japan.
  • U.S. first hydrogen bomb 1952
  • Soviet Union’s first hydrogen bomb 1953

• The “nuclear arms race” begins

Containment in Asia

• Japan
  • Limited military
  • Constitution
  • Restoration of economy
  • Ally of U.S.
Civil War in China
• Mao Zedong (Communists) vs. Jiang Jieshi (Chinese Nationalists/KMT/Kuomintang) for power in China since 1929
• U.S. provided $2 billion to...
• Funds were eventually cut off. Result-

The Korean War
• First “proxy war” in Cold War
• After WW2 Soviets and U.S. agreed to jointly occupy Korea (38th parallel)
• 1950 North Korea launched a surprise attack
• U.S. and U.N. troops assembled in Korea
• China joined in, provoked by U.S. military (stupid...)
• Armistice was reached in 1953
• Precedents: no nuclear weapons used, containment confirmed, permanent U.S. mobilization
The Munich Analogy

• The U.S. vowed to use appeasement in the Cold War (like France and England in WW2 in Czechoslovakia)

• What was the consequence of this approach?
  • Drew Americans into armed conflicts
  • Support of repressive, corrupt, and unethical right-wing regimes
Cold War Liberalism

- Preservation of core programs of the New Deal welfare state, containment, and fight against so-called subversives at home. Combination of moderate liberal policies and anticommunism. A practical centrist policy.

- Growing union membership was countered by Republican Taft-Hartley Act (1947) which eroded state protection of unions. “right to work”
Truman and the End of Reform

The 1948 Election
• On left- progressives, civil rights advocates, anti-Cold War peace activists
• On right- Jim Crow supporters allied with Republicans on economic and foreign policy issues
• Truman retained support from Jewish, Catholic, black, and organized labor voters
• Strom Thurmond (SC governor) a “Dixiecrat” (Southern white Jim Crow supporting Democrat) had a strong turnout in the election showing the division in the Democrat party

The Fair Deal
• National health insurance, aid to education, a housing program, expansion of Social Security, higher minimum wage, and new agricultural program.
• Conservatives fought to restrict the Fair Deal with growing paranoia over internal subversion and socialism propaganda ("socialized medicine")
Red Scare: The Hunt for Communists

- Legitimate suspicions and real fears, along with political opportunism, combined to fuel the national Red Scare, longer and more far-reaching than the one that followed World War I.

Loyalty-Security Program

- Executive Order 9835- investigate any federal employee for “subversive” activities
- Broad enough to allow “witch hunts”
  - Gay men and lesbians were dismissed from government jobs
- Local governments, churches, universities, and businesses followed suit

HUAC

- House of Un-American Activities-
  - blacklist
- American Communist Party in reality was harmless, promoting mostly union and civil rights agenda
McCarthyism

- **Joseph McCarthy Senator** of WI used fear and propaganda to fuel the Red Scare.
- “The List”
- Accused political opponents of being “soft on communism”
- In 1954 launched an investigation into subversive activities in the U.S. Army. Result?
The Politics of Cold War Liberalism

• Election of 1952 the new president Dwight “Ike” Eisenhower set the tone for the modern Republican Party.

America under Eisenhower

• Nikita Khrushchev emerged as Stalin’s successor. More agreeable than Stalin.
• Eisenhower limited cost of containment by...
• Did not speak out against McCarthy, did not support civil rights, accepted welfare state. Conservative began to revolt against liberal and moderate Republicans.
• Democrats and Republicans seemed in broad agreement about the realities of the Cold War and the welfare state.
• Their differences came with regard to civil rights for African Americans. An issue that would divide the country
Containment in the Postcolonial World

• Third World pawns in the game.

The Cold War and Colonial Independence

• U.S. supported dictatorships or right wing regimes, no matter how oppressive. As long as they were anti-Communist.

Vietnam

• Ho Chi Minh led Vietnam to independence. But as a communist, the U.S. was concerned.

• Truman enforced the “domino theory”

• The U.S. supported South Vietnam’s Ngo Dinh Diem. Although oppressive and violent to the people of South Vietnam.

• Diem was supported by the U.S. with $200 million a year
The Middle East
• In 1947 the U.N. voted to partition Palestine between Jewish and Arab sectors.
• Zionist leaders proclaimed the state of Israel
• Arabs were permanently stranded or deported
• Truman recognized the new state, winning support from Jewish voters and alienating the Arab world
• The U.S. convinced England and France to relinquish the Suez Canal in Egypt

John F. Kennedy and the Cold War

The Election of 1960 and the New Frontier
• Kennedy won a close election versus Nixon. Television played a major role.

Crisis in Cuba and Berlin
• Bay of Pigs 1961-
• Berlin Wall 1961-
• Cuban Missile Crisis 1962-
Kennedy and the World

• Peace Corps
• NASA

Making a Commitment in Vietnam

• Conflict between Communist Ho Chi Minh and religious oppressive U.S. supported of Ngo Dinh Diem resulted in Buddhists staged dramatic demonstrations.

• After Diem’s assassination (and his brother), the U.S. was implicated and a series of coups ensued.