

# The Continuing Cold War

## READING FOCUS

- What were the characteristics of the McCarthy era?
- How was the Cold War waged in South-east Asia, the Middle East, and Latin America during the 1950s?
- How did the arms race develop?

## KEY TERMS

McCarthyism  
arms race  
deterrence  
brinkmanship  
ICBM  
*Sputnik*  
U-2 incident

## TAKING NOTES

As you read, prepare an outline of the first section. Follow the model below.

### The McCarthy Era

#### I. McCarthy's Rise to Power

##### A. McCarthy needed a popular issue for the 1952 election.

1. \_\_\_\_\_

2. \_\_\_\_\_

B. \_\_\_\_\_

## MAIN IDEA

During the 1950s, the Cold War spread around the world. At home, McCarthyism caused fear and distrust.

**Setting the Scene** Communist aggression in Korea was already heightening Americans' fear of communism when Wisconsin Senator Joseph McCarthy held up a piece of paper and declared, "I have here in my hand a list of 205 [people] who were known to the secretary of state as being members of the Communist Party and who, nevertheless, are still working and shaping policy at the State Department." In the Cold War atmosphere of 1950, McCarthy's charges quickly gained so much support that only the most courageous spoke out against him. One such person was Edward R. Murrow, who concluded his TV show on McCarthy by saying that "[t]his is no time for men who oppose Senator McCarthy to keep silent." He explained:

*"[T]he line between investigating and persecuting is a very fine one and the junior Senator from Wisconsin has stepped over it repeatedly. . . . We must not confuse dissent with disloyalty. We must remember always that accusation is not proof. . . . We can deny our heritage and our history, but we cannot escape responsibility for the result. . . ."*

—Edward R. Murrow

## The McCarthy Era

In 1950, it seemed to many Americans that the events in Asia supported McCarthy's sensational charges. However, the famous list of 205 known State Department Communists turned out to be the names of people who were still employed by the government, even though they had been accused of disloyalty under Truman's loyalty program. When pressed for details, the senator reduced the number from 205 to 57. Nevertheless, McCarthy's accusations sparked an anti-Communist hysteria and national search for subversives that caused suspicion and fear across the nation.

**McCarthy's Rise to Power** Joseph McCarthy's first term in the Senate had been undistinguished and he needed an issue to arouse public support. He found that issue in the menace of communism. Piling baseless accusations on top of unprovable charges, McCarthy took his crusade to the floor of the Senate and engaged in the smear tactics that came to be called **McCarthyism**. Not only was McCarthy reelected, but he became

## ANALYZING POLITICAL

**CARTOONS** The caption of this cartoon cites Senator McCarthy's famous claim to have proof of subversion "in his hand." **Drawing Conclusions** (a) According to the cartoon, what does McCarthy really have, instead of proof? (b) What is the message of the cartoon?



"I Have Here In My Hand—"

**VIEWING HISTORY** Army counsel Joseph Welch listens as Senator Joseph McCarthy discusses Communist infiltration into the army. **Analyzing Visual Information** (a) What emotion do you think Welch is experiencing? Why do you think he feels that way? (b) What was the result of the Army-McCarthy hearings?



chairman of an investigations subcommittee. Merely being accused by McCarthy caused people to lose their jobs and reputations.

McCarthy soon took on larger targets. He attacked former Secretary of State George Marshall, a national hero and a man of unquestioned integrity. McCarthy claimed that Marshall was involved in “a conspiracy so immense and an infamy so black as to dwarf any previous venture in the history of man,” because of his inability to stop the Communist triumph in China.

Even other senators came to fear McCarthy. They worried that opposition to his tactics would brand them as Communist sympathizers. But there were a few exceptions. As early as June 1950, Republican Senator Margaret Chase Smith of Maine presented a Declaration of Conscience to the Senate. She denounced McCarthy for having “debased” the Senate “to the level of a forum of hate and character assassination sheltered by the shield of congressional immunity. . . .”

**McCarthy’s Fall** In early 1954, when one of his assistants was drafted, McCarthy charged that even the army was full of Communists. Army officials, in turn, charged McCarthy with seeking special treatment for his aide. As charges and countercharges flew back and forth, the senator’s subcommittee voted to investigate the claims.

The Army-McCarthy hearings began in late April 1954. Democrats asked that the hearings be televised, hoping that the public would see McCarthy for what he was. Ever eager for publicity, the senator agreed. For weeks, Americans were riveted to their television sets. Most were horrified by McCarthy’s bullying tactics and baseless allegations.

By the time the hearings ended in mid-June, the senator had lost even his strongest supporters. The Senate formally condemned him for his reckless actions. Unrepentant, McCarthy charged his accusers with being tools of the Communists, but he no longer had credibility. Although McCarthy remained in the Senate, his power was gone.

Eventually this second red scare, much like the one that followed World War I, subsided. But the nation was damaged by the era’s suppression of free speech and open, honest debate.

## The Cold War in the 1950s

American Cold War policy entered a new phase when Republican Dwight D. Eisenhower became President in 1953. Eisenhower’s Secretary

## Focus on CITIZENSHIP

### Declaration of Conscience

Margaret Chase Smith’s declaration to the Senate made it clear that Senator McCarthy, far from protecting American values as he claimed, was really putting American principles in danger:

“Those of us who shout the loudest about Americanism in making character assassinations are all too frequently

those who, by our own words and acts, ignore some of the basic principles of Americanism—

- The right to criticize;
- The right to hold unpopular beliefs;
- The right to protest;
- The right of independent thought.

The exercise of these rights should not cost one single American citizen his right to a livelihood nor should he be in danger of losing his reputation nor should he be in danger . . . merely because he happens to know someone who holds unpopular beliefs.”



of State, John Foster Dulles, was a harsh anti-Communist who considered winning the Cold War to be a moral crusade. Dulles believed that Truman's containment policy was too cautious. Instead, he called for a policy to roll back communism where it had already taken hold.

As a military leader, Eisenhower recognized the risks of confronting the Soviets. He acted as a brake on Dulles's more extreme views. In Eisenhower's judgment, the United States could not intervene in the affairs of the Soviet Union's Eastern European satellites. So when East Germans revolted in 1953, and Poles and Hungarians in 1956, the United States kept its distance as Soviet troops crushed the uprisings. Eisenhower felt that any other response risked war with the Soviet Union. He wanted to avoid that at all costs. Thus containment remained an important part of American foreign policy in the 1950s.

**Southeast Asia** In July 1953, Eisenhower fulfilled a campaign promise to bring the Korean War to an end. The sudden death of Stalin in March and the rapid rise of more moderate Soviet leaders contributed to the resolution of this conflict. Meanwhile, the United States began providing substantial military aid to support France, which was trying to retain control of its colony, Vietnam. When an international conference divided Vietnam, like Korea, into a Communist north and an anti-Communist south, the United States provided aid to South Vietnam, but—for the time being—resisted greater involvement. (See Chapter 24.)

**The Middle East** The Cold War was also played out in the historic tensions of the Middle East. In the 1930s and 1940s, the Holocaust had forced many Jews to seek safety in Palestine, the Biblical home of the Jewish people, now controlled by the British. Calls for a Jewish state intensified. In 1947, the British turned the question over to the UN, which created two states in the area, one Jewish and one Arab. In May 1948, the Jews in Palestine proclaimed the new nation of Israel. Israel's Arab neighbors, who also viewed Palestine as their ancient homeland, attacked the Jewish state in 1948. Israel repelled the Arab assault, and the UN mediated new borders. As Arab hostility to the idea of a Jewish state continued, the United States supported Israel, while the Soviet Union generally backed Arab interests.

Meanwhile, the United States also worked to prevent oil-rich Arab nations from falling under the influence of the Soviet Union. In 1952, a nationalist leader gained control in Iran. Fearful that he would be neutral—or worse, sympathetic to Communism—the United States backed groups that overthrew the nationalist government and restored the pro-American Shah of Iran to power.

Next came the Suez crisis of 1956. When Egypt's ruler, Gamal Abdel Nasser, sought Soviet support, the United States and Great Britain cut off their aid to Egypt. Nasser responded by seizing the British-owned Suez Canal. This canal was a vital waterway that passed through Egypt and allowed Middle East oil to reach Europe via the Mediterranean. In late 1956, British and French forces attacked Egypt to regain control of the canal, despite prior assurances they would not rely on force. Reacting to Soviet threats of "dangerous consequences," a furious Eisenhower persuaded his NATO allies to withdraw from Egypt, which retained control of the canal.

To combat further Soviet influence in the Middle East, the President announced the Eisenhower Doctrine in

**MAP SKILLS** Following the 1948 war, Israel controlled most of what had been Palestine, but Egypt barred all Israeli ships and any ships of any nationality going to or from Israel from using the Suez Canal. **Location** (a) Why do you think the Suez Canal was important to Israel and to its trading partners? (b) What do you think Egypt's purpose was in denying access to Israel?



## From Sputnik to Space Station



When the Soviets launched *Sputnik* in 1957, they also launched the space race. NASA was established in 1958 to oversee an American space program that could compete with

the Soviets. However, in 1961, the Soviets scored another win: the first man in space. Competition continued through the 1960s, but the Americans raised the stakes by landing on the moon in 1969.

The two nations also continued to launch orbiting satellites. In 1973, the American *Skylab* became the first successful space station, but the Soviet *Mir*, launched in 1986, was the most successful, remaining in orbit until 2001. *Mir*, which means “peace” in Russian, also changed the nature of space exploration: it became a cooperative venture. Crews from many nations visited *Mir*, including the United States beginning in 1995. And in 1998, when the United States and Russia began assembling the International Space Station, to which many nations will eventually contribute, a new era of cooperation had truly begun.

**? Which kind of “space race” do you think would lead to more progress: competition or cooperation? Explain your reasoning.**

January 1957. This policy stated that the United States would use force “to safeguard the independence of any country or group of countries in the Middle East requesting aid against [Communist-inspired] aggression.” Eisenhower used his doctrine in 1958 to justify landing troops in Lebanon to put down a revolt against its pro-American government.

**Latin America** The United States also acted to support pro-American governments and to suppress Communist influences in Latin America, especially where American companies had large investments. Since the mid-1920s, the United States had exercised control over the economies of some ten Latin American nations. In Central America, United States troops had invaded Nicaragua and Honduras to prop up leaders who supported American interests. In 1947, the United States signed the Rio Pact, a regional defense alliance with 18 other nations in the Western Hemisphere. The next year, the United States led the way in forming the Organization of American States (OAS) to increase cooperation among the nations of the hemisphere.

In 1954, the CIA helped overthrow the government of Guatemala on the grounds that its leaders were sympathetic to radical causes. The CIA takeover restored the property of an American corporation, the United Fruit Company, which had been seized by the Guatemalan government. Such actions fueled a Soviet perception that America was escalating the Cold War.

## The Arms Race

Throughout the 1950s, the United States and the Soviet Union waged an increasingly intense struggle for world leadership. Nowhere was this competition more dangerous

than in the **arms race**, the struggle to gain weapons superiority.

**The Growth of Nuclear Arsenals** In August 1953, less than a year after the United States exploded its first thermonuclear device, the Soviet Union successfully tested its own hydrogen bomb. As part of the policy of deterrence begun by President Truman, Eisenhower stepped up American weapons development. **Deterrence** is the policy of making the military power of the United States and its allies so strong that no enemy would dare attack for fear of retaliation. Between 1954 and 1958, the United States conducted 19 hydrogen bomb tests in the Pacific. One of these explosions, in March 1954, was over 750 times more powerful than the atomic bomb that had been dropped on Nagasaki in World War II. Japanese fishermen some 90 miles from the blast suffered severe radiation burns. The test was a chilling warning that nuclear war could threaten the entire world with radioactive contamination.

**Brinkmanship** American policymakers used the fear of nuclear war to achieve their Cold War objectives. In 1956, Secretary of State John Dulles made it clear that the United States was prepared to risk war to protect its national interests. Dulles explained the policy of **brinkmanship** this way: “The ability to get to the verge without getting into the war is the necessary art. If you cannot master it, you inevitably get into war. If you try to run away from it, if you are scared to

go to the brink, you are lost.” Many Americans agreed with the reaction of Illinois senator Adlai Stevenson: “I am shocked that the Secretary of State is willing to play Russian roulette with the life of our nation.” Still, the Eisenhower administration relied on the policy of brinkmanship.

**Cold War in the Skies** To carry hydrogen bombs to their targets, American military planners relied mainly on airplanes. Unable to match this strength, the Soviets focused on long-range rockets known as intercontinental ballistic missiles, or **ICBMs**. Americans also worked to develop ICBMs. However, in part because of its dependence on conventional air power, the United States lagged behind the Soviet Union in missile development.

The size of this technology gap became apparent in 1957, when the Soviets used one of their rockets to launch *Sputnik*, the first artificial satellite to orbit Earth. The realization that the rocket used to launch *Sputnik* could carry a hydrogen bomb to American shores added to American shock and fear.

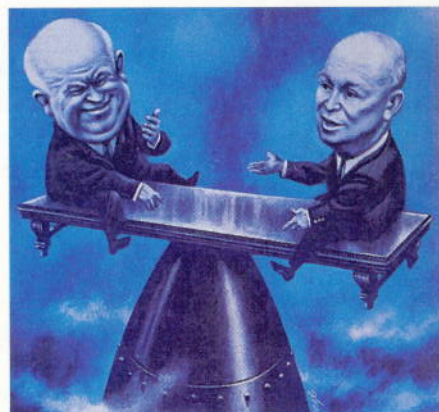
In May 1960, the Soviet military again demonstrated its arms capabilities by using a guided missile to shoot down an American U-2 spy plane over Soviet territory. Because these spy planes flew more than 15 miles high, American officials had assumed that they were invulnerable to attack. The **U-2 incident** shattered this confidence, and made Americans willing to expend considerable resources to catch up to—and surpass—the Soviet Union.

One legacy of the Cold War was the creation of what Eisenhower called a “permanent armaments industry of vast proportions.” As he left office, he warned that the existence of this military-industrial complex, employing millions of Americans and having a financial stake in war-making, could become a threat to peace:

**KEY DOCUMENTS**

“Our arms must be mighty, ready for instant action. . . . We recognize the imperative need for this development. Yet we must not fail to comprehend its grave implications. . . . [In] government, we must guard against the acquisition of unwarranted [unnecessary] influence, whether sought or unsought, by the military-industrial complex. The potential for the disastrous rise of misplaced power exists and will persist.”

—Dwight D. Eisenhower, Farewell Address, 1961



This 1959 *Newsweek* illustration shows Soviet leader Khrushchev (left) and President Eisenhower (right) using missiles to maintain a balance of power.

## Section

## 4

## Assessment

### READING COMPREHENSION

1. What was **McCarthyism**?
2. What was the **arms race**?
3. How did the policy of **deterrence** influence U.S. actions during the Cold War?
4. How did *Sputnik* and the **U-2 incident** affect American public opinion and policy?

### CRITICAL THINKING AND WRITING

5. **Identifying Alternatives** When could President Eisenhower have chosen an alternative to containment and the arms race? How might history have been different if he had done so?
6. **Writing a Letter** Write a letter urging a senator of 1952 to oppose Senator McCarthy.



### Take It to the NET

#### Activity: Writing a Diary Entry

Learn more about *Sputnik* and how Americans reacted to it. Write a diary entry as if you were an American of 1957 who has just heard about the launch of the Soviet satellite. Use the links provided in the *America: Pathways to the Present* area of the following Web site for help in completing this activity.

[www.phschool.com](http://www.phschool.com)