

OUR CONTEMPORARY WORLD

SOCIAL STUDIES 1009

The center spread of this LIGHTUNIT is a time-line chart
which can be removed for easier reference.

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I. COLD WAR

Relationships between the U.S.A. and the former U.S.S.R. have been strained since 1917, when a revolution in Russia established a communist dictatorship. Later the Soviets called for world revolution and the overthrow of capitalism.

During World War II, these tensions were somewhat lifted when the U.S.A. and the U.S.S.R. opposed a mutual threat—Hitler's Nazi campaign. But the Atlantic Charter Convention of 1941 and the Yalta Conference of 1945 revealed that two distinct **ideologies** were represented with few

opportunities for compromise. The U.S.S.R. failed to adhere to all the terms because the philosophy of communism under Stalin was at odds with the basic premise of the Atlantic Charter and the Yalta Conference—that each nation should determine its own form of government.

This conflict of philosophy led to intense rivalry between groups of communist and non-communist nations. This rivalry is known as the **Cold War**.

SECTION OBJECTIVES

Read these objectives. When you have completed this section, you should be able:

1. To define the term *cold war*.
2. To identify the conflicting philosophies operating in the Cold War.
3. To outline the main events of the Korean War.
4. To describe the Cuban Crisis.
5. To discuss the causes, progression, and results of the Vietnam War.
6. To trace the events of the Afghanistan Takeover.
7. To discuss the contemporary struggles and events within the communist world.

VOCABULARY

Study these words to enhance your learning in this section.

arms race

Cold War

despot

détente

dilemma

glasnost

holocaust

ideologies

perestroika

stalemate

Vietminh

Vietcong



Note: All vocabulary words in this LIGHTUNIT appear in **boldface** print the first time they are used. If you are unsure of the meaning when you are reading, study the definitions given in the glossary.

IDEOLOGICAL CONFLICT

Cold war is a term used to describe the political and economic contest for national advantage without actual military conflict. The Cold War between communist and non-communist nations was an aggressive struggle to gain the upper hand of world power and economics using all tactics short

of combat with the opposing force. It has been characterized by mutual distrust, suspicion, misunderstanding, accusations, military arms buildups, and propaganda between nations adhering to opposing ideologies.

The communist philosophy dictates tight control

over areas it considers vital to national interest. This includes government ownership of all land and industry, regulation regarding economic production, and legislation restricting religious and communist-threatening political activities. The purpose for this control is to provide equality and economic security. This control is obtained and maintained by revolution and force. The U.S.S.R. was the world leader of communism.

The opposite ideology, known as capitalism or democracy, is promoted by many Western nations, including the U.S.A. and Canada. It seeks a world of independent nations whose governments are voluntarily chosen by the citizens of each country. It strives for individual liberty and the exercise of such personal rights as expression, religion, and employment. The government controls such activities that directly affect the unity

and security of the nation and its people, but allows the populace as much freedom and choice as possible. It promotes an economic policy of free enterprise.

The revolutionary threat of enforcing one particular ideology upon a nation apart from its consent caused Western Bloc non-communist nations to attempt to curb the aggressive Eastern Bloc communist promoters. The threat of weaker, less stable political systems as a result of individual freedoms caused communist nations to pursue their goal for world security and equality. Both sides have tried to attain or maintain superiority by the building of military strength, known as the **arms race**. They have attempted preeminence in the space programs. They seek the favor of other nations by giving economic or military aid in return for support of their ideology.



Complete the following activities.

- 1.1 Define the term *cold war*. _____

- 1.2 Summarize the opposing ideologies of the Cold War.
a. communism: _____

- b. democracy: _____

- 1.3 Name features and tactics that characterize the Cold War.

KOREAN CONFLICT

Korea is a small country located between Japan and China, surrounded by the Sea of Japan and the Yellow Sea. Part of the settlement of the Yalta Conference allowed for the division of Korea at the 38th parallel, with North Korea being under communist control. The Republic of Korea (South Korea) is subject to Western democratic influences.

The goal of South Korea and democratic nations was Korean autonomy and eventual unification. North Korea and its communist allies wanted a unified Korea under their control. On June 25, 1950, North Korea, heavily backed by the Russian and Chinese governments, invaded South Korea. The United Nations council demanded "a cessation of hostilities and a withdrawal of North Korean forces to the 38th parallel." This plea was ignored.

Phases. The United Nations viewed this invasion as a threat to South Korean independence and began sending ground forces as a military presence to aid South Korea. This was done without a formal declaration of war, and was called a "police action." Phase one of the war began with the landing of U.S. Marines and Allied troops at Inchon. They took the North Korean capital of Pyongyang and reached the Manchurian border. South Korean victory seemed possible.

The second phase of the war began when 200,000 Chinese "volunteers" staged a counterattack. The communist forces drove seventy miles into South Korea and forced United Nations' troops and Korean civilians to evacuate. The two sides struggled back and forth over the 38th parallel. The balance of strength shifted to the North Koreans as the struggle continued.

The third phase began when General Douglas MacArthur, first commander of the U.S. forces in Korea, was replaced. MacArthur wished to employ full military strength to repel the Chinese. President Truman was eager to negotiate for peace and insisted all military strategy must be approved by Washington. MacArthur ignored the request and was charged with insubordination. General Matthew Ridgeway replaced MacArthur, the combat reached a **stalemate**, and peace negotiations were begun.

End of the war. After several truce talk

attempts, an armistice agreement was signed on July 27, 1953, at Panmunjom, and the prisoner exchange program was begun. The war ended where it had begun—at the 38th parallel. However, a permanent peace plan could not be established. Only a tentative peace exists under the wary and watchful eyes of North and South Korean forces. Korea remains divided geographically and politically.

The real aggressors had fought a political battle of a very subtle nature. The United Nations named China as the aggressor in Korea in 1951. What appeared to be a civil war in Korea was really the stage of a battle between East and West—between communism and democracy.





Match the following.

- | | | | |
|------|-------|---------------|--------------------------------------|
| 1.4 | _____ | North Korea | a. change in military leadership |
| 1.5 | _____ | South Korea | b. commander of U.S. forces in Korea |
| 1.6 | _____ | 38th parallel | c. aggressor |
| 1.7 | _____ | Phase 1 | d. American and Allied attack |
| 1.8 | _____ | Phase 2 | e. president during Korean War |
| 1.9 | _____ | Phase 3 | f. communist-controlled |
| 1.10 | _____ | MacArthur | g. communist counterattack |
| 1.11 | _____ | Truman | h. line dividing Korea |
| | | | i. democratic influences |



Answer the following question.

- 1.12 How was the Korean conflict an example of a cold war even though combat was used?

CUBAN CRISIS

The strategic location and the communist influence of this small island, ninety miles east of Florida, U.S.A., became the focus of Cold War conflict in the early 1960s. For several tense weeks, the world wondered whether a devastating nuclear war was imminent.

Communist threat. Cuba had been struggling under the domineering hand of a rightist dictator, Fulgencio Batista. After several revolutionary and guerrilla-tactic attempts, a group led by Fidel Castro was successful in overthrowing the existing government in 1959. Gradually American-owned properties were seized by the communists.

The proximity of this communist government was seen as a threat by the United States. In April, 1961, a small American-supported invasion of anti-Castro Cubans in the Bay of Pigs, off Cuba's coast, was crushed by Castro forces.

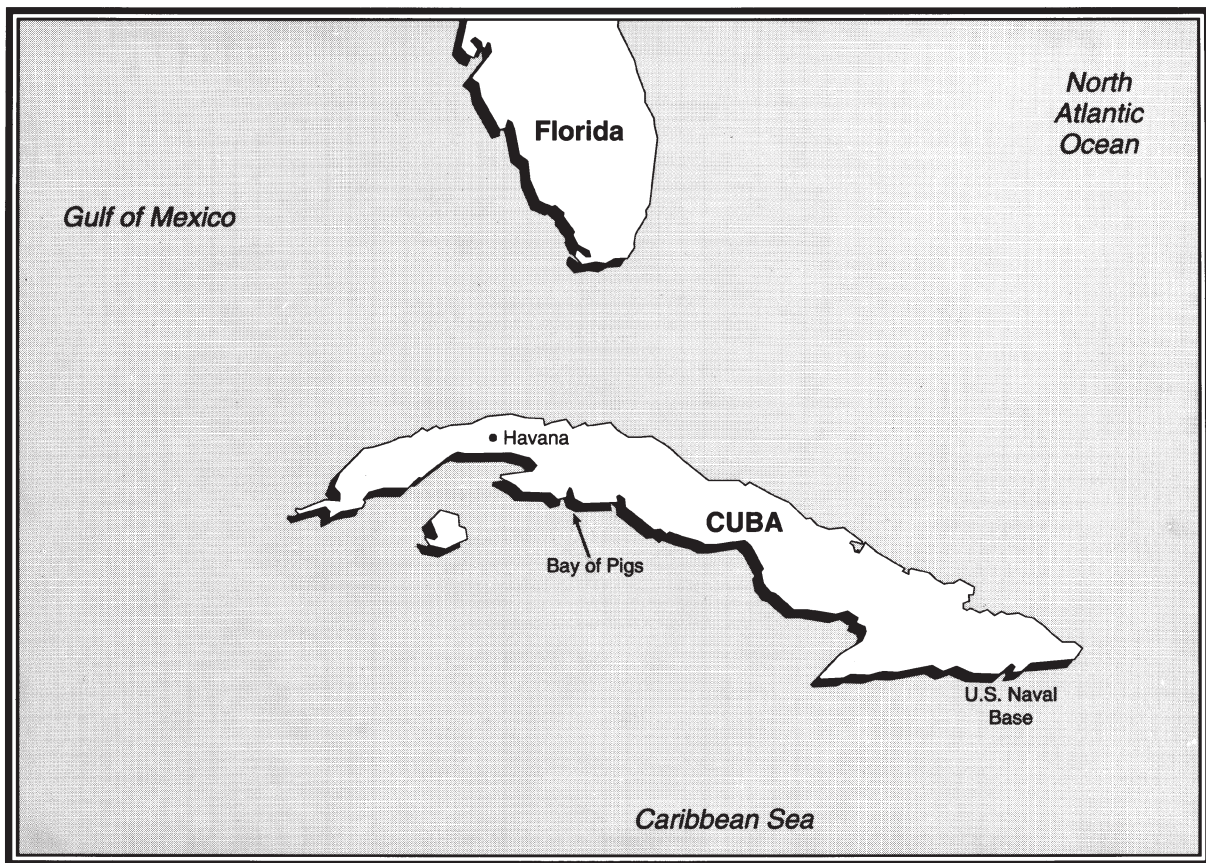
Missile crisis. In 1962, feeling a threat of another U.S. invasion, Cuba requested additional military aid from the U.S.S.R. The U.S. received

intelligence information of missiles aimed at the American mainland.

President John F. Kennedy faced a **dilemma**. The missiles must be removed, but an American attack could result in nuclear combat. The world was tense. He ordered a naval blockade halting further Soviet shipments to Cuba. He demanded removal of all missiles and their bases.

Finally, the U.S.S.R. agreed to the demands in return for an American promise not to attack Cuba. Castro protested as the Soviet Union crated up and returned the war machinery to the U.S.S.R.

Averting nuclear disaster. Both the U.S.S.R. and the U.S.A. realized that the world had been brought to the brink of a nuclear **holocaust**. Something needed to be done. Both sides appreciated the words of President Kennedy: "The weapons of war must be abolished before they abolish us." Efforts were made for nuclear disarmament. A direct teletype between Moscow and Washington was set up to allow fast and accurate communication between the two powers.



CUBA



Complete the following statements.

- 1.13 a. _____ and his communist-led forces overthrew the dictatorial government of b. _____ .
- 1.14 The _____ invasion was an American failure.
- 1.15 _____ assisted Cuba in preparing for a suspected American invasion.
- 1.16 President Kennedy issued two demands regarding armament buildup in Cuba:
- a. _____
- _____
- b. _____
- _____
- _____