Introduction to the Cold War
What is the Cold War?

The Cold War is the conflict that existed between the United States and Soviet Union from 1945 to 1991. It is called “cold” because the two sides never went to war directly with each other.
If the US & USSR Never Fought Directly, why do we call it a war?

• Many wars WERE fought between Communists (supported by the USSR) and anti-Communists (supported by US)
• The US and USSR competed for power by using their political, economic, and military clout throughout the world
• Both sides felt their national survival was at stake
Presentation Outline

I. Significance of the Cold War
II. Causes of the Cold War
III. Historical Background
IV. Events of the Cold War
Part I. The Significance of the Cold War

Why should we study the Cold War?
How has the Cold War affected US History?

- Brought the world to the brink of nuclear destruction
- Was the direct cause of the US wars in Korea and Vietnam
- Led to the 1969 moon landing
- Is largely responsible for the US national debt
- Shaped the post-World War II era
1. To the brink of nuclear destruction

The US & the USSR raced to be ahead of one another in atomic warfare, building thousands of nuclear weapons much more powerful than those used in World War II.
2. War in Korea & Vietnam

The US fought 2 wars to contain the spread of Communism. The spread of Communism was seen as a growth in the power of the USSR. Over 100,000 Americans were killed.
3. To the Moon

The Soviets and Americans competed to develop new technology. When the Soviets were the first to launch a satellite, the US raced to be the first to the moon.
4. We’re still paying...

The Soviet Union collapsed in 1991. 1 reason is that it could not keep up with the US in defense spending. The US went heavily into debt to beat the Soviets.
Why is there a North and South Korea? Why was there an East and West Germany? Why did the US support some dictators and oppose some free elections? Answer: Cold War
Part II: What Caused the Cold War?

The US and USSR fought against a common enemy in World War II. The alliance did not last long. What caused the US and USSR to turn from allies to enemies?
CAUSES

Philosophical Differences
- Soviet Union: communism, totalitarian dictatorship
- United States: free-enterprise capitalism, republic

World War II Conflicts
- Soviets wanted British and Americans to open a second European front earlier in war.
- United States secretly developed atomic bomb.

Postwar Conflicts
- Soviet Union refused to live up to wartime promises of elections in Eastern Europe.
- United States made efforts to resist Soviet expansion.

The Cold War
- An era of high tension between the United States and the Soviet Union.
Cause #1: Mistrust

• The 2 nations simply did not trust each other. Each felt that the other was out to undermine them. When disagreement arose, both sides assumed the worst. For example:

• The Soviets remembered the attempt by US forces to overthrow the Communist Government during their civil war.

• The US felt that Stalin had broken promises about free elections in Eastern Europe after World War II.
Cause #2: Competition for Power

• The US and USSR emerged from World War II as the most powerful nations in the world.
• Both wanted to create a “new world order” that would protect their interests.
• Often, the 2 sides would disagree on what that should be. This produced conflict.
Cause #3: Competing Ideologies

• An ideology is a way of looking at the world or a system of beliefs.

• The Soviets had a communist dictatorship and opposed capitalism.

• The Americans had a capitalist democracy and opposed communism.
IN DEPTH: Why did the United States Hate & Fear Communism?

A) What is communism?
B) Why did the US feel threatened by it?
Communism: What is It?

- Karl Marx wrote the Communist Manifesto in 1848.
- In this book, he explained his ideas on Communism. This became a model for the Communist governments of the 1900s.
Quotes from Marx:

“Society as a whole is more and more splitting into two great hostile camps...: Bourgeoisie (the class of modern Capitalists, owners of the means of production and employers of wage labor) and Proletariat (the class of modern wage laborers who, having no means of production of their own, are reduced to selling their labor in order to live)”
“The theory of Communists may be summed up in a single sentence: Abolition of private property.”
“Communism abolishes all eternal truths, it abolishes all religion”
The Communists “openly declare that their ends can be attained only by the forcible overthrow of all existing social conditions. Let the ruling class tremble at a Communist revolution. The proletarians have nothing to lose but their chains. They have a world to win. WORKING MEN OF ALL COUNTRIES UNITE”
Summary

• Communism favors collective or community ownership of property
• The government (acting for the people) makes economic decisions
• “From each according to his capacity, to each according to his needs.”
• Communists seek to overthrow existing governments in revolutions.
And why did Americans dislike it?

• Many felt Communism discouraged hard work and promoted laziness

• Communism took away personal freedom and individuality

• Communism was opposed to religion

• The USSR was a brutal dictatorship--people equated Communism with dictatorship
Part III. Historical Background

A. The Russian Revolution

B. USSR (1917-1939)

C. Post-War Disagreement
A. Russian Revolution

- Until 1917, Russia has been ruled by a Czar (King-like dictator)
- In 1917, Russia experienced 2 revolutions
- After a brief Republican government, the Communists took control in October led by Vladimir Lenin (left)
A Civil War Erupts

• Russia fought a Civil War from 1918-1921.
• On one side were the Communists or RED Russians (also called Bolsheviks).
• On the other side were the anti-Communist White Russians (nothing to do with race)
• A number of nations sent troops to the aid of the White Russians, including the USA.
• The Communists won the war and firmly established the Communist dictatorship that would last 70 years.
B. USSR (1922-1991)

- The Union of Soviet Socialist Republics was created in 1922.
- It consisted of Russia and eventually 14 other large Republics.
- It spanned 11 time zones and was the world’s largest nation.
Stalin Comes To Power

• The US did not establish relations with the USSR until 1933
• After Lenin’s death, Joseph Stalin was able to take control of the USSR.
• Stalin ruthlessly created a totalitarian regime.
C. Post-War Disagreement

- The challenge: the US, USSR, and Britain would have to lay the foundation for a stable and peaceful post-war world.
What did the US Want?

- The US wanted a democratic world, sharing “American” values.
- The US wanted a community of nations committed to free trade.
What did the USSR want?

- Stalin wanted security.
- Believing that the west was a threat to any Communist nation, he sought a “buffer zone.”
- This meant control of Eastern Europe.
Alliance Fades Into Conflict

- Why didn’t Truman tell Stalin when he would use the atomic bomb on Japan?
- Who should control the lands conquered during World War II? [Germany, Eastern Europe, Japan, Korea, etc.]
- Did Stalin promise free elections in Eastern Europe and then break his promise?
Summary

• The World War II alliance between the US and the USSR should really be seen as a temporary arrangement to defeat a common enemy.

• Deep differences in politics, economics, and history divided the nations.

• Disagreement over what the post-war world should look like split the alliance into competing camps. They would compete for 40 years.
Part IV. Significant Events
Feb. 1945 Yalta Agreement

• The “Big 3” Meet at Yalta
• The USSR agrees to enter the war in the Pacific.
• Stalin demands control of Eastern Europe but makes vague promises to allow free elections in the future.
Feb. 1946 Early Tensions

• By 1946, Stalin had declared that there would be no lasting peace with capitalism. At this time, he controlled Eastern Europe and refused to hold elections in Poland.

• Truman, mindful of Munich, took a tough approach to dealings with Stalin.
Early in 1946, Soviet expert George Kennan sent a sixteen page telegram from Moscow to Washington.

He argued that the Soviets were fanatical and that the US must act firmly to CONTAIN Soviet aggression and influence.

Containment became the overall US policy toward the USSR.
1946: Iron Curtain Speech

• Former British Prime Minister Winston Churchill gave a speech at a small college in Missouri in which he warned of growing Soviet Power.
• Some consider this speech a declaration of Cold War pitting East vs. West.
1947: Truman Doctrine

• In the Spring of 1947, it looked as though Communist forces may overthrow the governments of Greece and Turkey.

• Truman asked congress for aid packages to prevent this from happening. This becomes known as the Truman Doctrine.
Truman Doctrine

• “I believe that it must be the policy of the United States to support free peoples who are resisting subjugation by armed minorities or by outside pressures.”

--Harry S. Truman, 1947
1947: Marshall Plan

• Convinced that all of Europe was susceptible to Communism because of the economies were in shambles, the US pledged a massive aid program totaling $17 Billion.

• It worked: Western Europe Recovered and Communism did not take root.
CONTAINMENT

US Cold War policy in one word.
1948: Berlin Airlift

- Germany had been split in half. Berlin had also been split, but was in East Germany. The West refused to give up West Berlin.
- Stalin tried to force surrender by blockading West Berlin.
- The West refused to give up and airlifted supplies to West Berlin.
1949: NATO Formed

• The North Atlantic Treaty Organization consisting of the US, Canada, and Western Europe becomes the first peace-time alliance in US history.

• The USSR counters with the Warsaw Pact in 1955.
1949: Year of Fear

- Nationalists lose the Civil War in China.
- Soviets explode their first atomic bomb.
1949: NSC-68

• Top-secret report suggests that the USSR is bent on “World domination” and that the US should quadruple its defense spending.

• The US follows this policy.
1950-1953 Korean War
Key Events

• June, 1950—North Korea (communist) invades South Korea (non-communist)
• UN supports a police action to protect South Korea
• Douglas MacArthur, UN commander, makes a brilliant landing at Inchon and pushes the North Koreans back
Key Events (continued)

• MacArthur continues to push North, provoking China’s entry into the war.
• A bloody stalemate develops
• Truman wants a negotiated peace, MacArthur says “there is no substitute for victory” and begins to openly criticize Truman. Truman fires MacArthur.
Key Events (continued)

- A cease-fire is agreed to in 1953 which places the border near the 38th parallel (as it was before the war).
- 40,000+ Americans and hundreds of thousands of Koreans and Chinese are killed.
Conclusion

• The Cold War continued until the late 1980s when Communism collapsed in Eastern Europe. Events that we will study in the coming weeks include:
  
  Sputnik & Space Race
  Cuban Missile Crisis
  Vietnam War
  Soviet Invasion of Afghanistan