

1945-1989:



THE COLD WAR



CFE 3203V

OPEN-CAPTIONED
NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC
SOCIETY

1991

Grade Levels: 9-13+

25 minutes

DESCRIPTION

Traces the history of the Cold War era after World War II. Includes the Potsdam Conference, the Marshall Plan, the Berlin airlift, China and Mao Tse-tung, the Korean War, Joseph McCarthy, and the Hungarian revolution. Mentions the Berlin Wall, Cuban missile crisis, Vietnam War, détente, Afghanistan, and lessened East-West tensions. Germany's reunification symbolized the end of the Cold War. Uses vintage footage.

INSTRUCTIONAL GOALS

- To depict the origins of the Cold War era.
- To summarize roles of Soviet and American leaders in the Cold War.
- To present the superpowers' tactics including espionage, economic warfare, propaganda, surrogate wars, and the race for space.
- To introduce varying phases of the Cold War including containment, the arms race, peaceful coexistence, détente, and lessening of East-West tensions.

BEFORE SHOWING

1. Preview the video to determine unfamiliar vocabulary and language concepts.
2. Create a time line of American and Soviet leaders from 1945-1989.
3. On a world map, locate the following places: the Elbe River, Yalta, Potsdam, China, Korea, Cuba, Vietnam, Angola, Afghanistan, and Berlin.

DURING SHOWING

1. View the video more than once, with one showing uninterrupted.

2. Pause the video at the map identifying the iron curtain and showing Moscow's influence.
 - a. Discuss the means Moscow used to exert control.
 - b. Evaluate the graphic used. Consider the color choice and movement depicted on the map.
 - c. Design a similar graphic for pro-Soviet viewers regarding United States influence during the Cold War era.

AFTER SHOWING

Discussion Items and Questions

1. Discuss World War II and its relation to the Cold War.
 - a. What were Germany's options other than unconditional surrender? What types of conditions can be negotiated with a surrender?
 - b. Compare Churchill's iron curtain with the Berlin Wall.
 - c. Why were East Berlin and East Germany one-third the sizes of West Berlin and West Germany?
 - d. What did the construction and destruction of the Berlin Wall symbolize?
2. Debate the policy of containment in the Truman Doctrine.
 - a. Was containment a just policy for the Cold War era? Is it a just policy for current times?
 - b. Were all of the countries supported under the Truman Doctrine "free peoples who are resisting attempted subjugation by armed minorities?"
 - c. How was Mao Tse-Tung's communist revolution in China related to the Cold War?
 - d. Were the people of Korea, Vietnam, Angola, and Afghanistan pawns or beneficiaries of the Cold War?
 - e. In Korea, Vietnam, Angola, and Afghanistan, did the United States have alliances not based

- on a mutual world view but on resisting a common enemy?
- f. What would the outcome have been if the United States had not followed the Truman Doctrine policy of containment in Korea, Vietnam, Angola, and Afghanistan?
3. Discuss technology and the Cold War.
- a. Compare United States and Soviet responses to the A-bomb in Hiroshima and the Soviet's A-bomb detonation in 1949.
 - b. Give reasons why Sputnik and the space race were Cold War issues.
4. Debate America's response to communism during the Cold War, using J. Edgar Hoover's quotations. Consider current alternative philosophies and ways of life.
- a. "It is . . . an evil and malignant way of life."
 - b. "It reveals a condition akin to disease that spreads like an epidemic."
 - c. "And, like an epidemic, a quarantine is necessary to keep it from infecting this nation."
5. Discuss the Cuban missile crisis.
- a. Debate if Kennedy's ultimatum to Khrushchev was a bluff or a decision to go to war.
 - b. Recommend what individuals could have done in response to the Cuban missile crisis rather than just watch in horror.
 - c. Hypothesize what might have happened if Khrushchev had not backed down during the Cuban missile crisis.
 - d. The Cuban missile crisis was referred to as "a war nobody wanted." Debate if there have been wars that somebody wanted.
 - e. Evaluate the value of a hotline between the White House and the Kremlin.

6. Discuss aspects of Soviet ideology.
 - a. Describe Khrushchev's and Stalin's beliefs about the future of capitalism.
 - b. Evaluate how Mikhail Gorbachev, the Soviet economy, *glasnost*, and *perestroika* influenced the Cold War.
7. Discuss the future of United States-Russia relations.
 - a. Debate if the United States and Russia are still uneasy allies.
 - b. Predict if the United States and Russia will dominate and polarize world affairs again, as they did during the Cold War.
8. Discuss the meaning of the following quotations:
 - a. "The lines are drawn. Advance no further." (the message of the A-bomb to Stalin)
 - b. "The world is no longer interested in peace . . . the Soviets will sacrifice butter for guns to ensure their survival." (Joseph Stalin)
 - c. "They are the focus of evil in the modern world." (Ronald Reagan)

Applications and Activities

1. Using the library and the Internet, locate news media headlines and maps.
 - a. From 1945-1989, find examples of Cold War activities of espionage, economic warfare, propaganda, surrogate wars, and the race for space.
 - b. Locate maps showing European borders before World War II, immediately after World War II, and in 1989.
2. Imagine being involved in events during the Cold War.
 - a. Regarding the atomic bomb dropped in Hiroshima, write a journal entry from the perspective of a Japanese, American, or Soviet citizen.

- b. Regarding the Marshall Plan, write an unsent letter to the United States government from a village leader in an area aided or not aided by the United States.
 - c. Regarding the Berlin blockade and airlift, write a letter home from a Soviet leader, an airlift pilot, or a resident of West or East Berlin.
 - d. Regarding the 1956 Hungarian revolution, write an editorial reflecting American opinions before, during, and after the attempted revolution.
 - e. Regarding the 1960 reconnaissance plane downed over the Soviet Union, write a news article from a Soviet or an American perspective.
 - f. Regarding the Berlin Wall, write a journal entry from the perspective of a German present when the wall was erected and demolished.
 - g. Regarding the escape from East to West Berlin shown on the video, role-play an interview with one of the escapees.
3. Compare the Soviets' attempt to starve the city of West Berlin into submission with the Nazi blockade of Leningrad during World War II.
4. Justify the establishment of an Un-Deaf Activities Committee.
- a. Recommend issues for committee action.
 - b. Evaluate the powers and tactics that should be used by such a committee.
5. Identify public figures who have made a name for themselves by attacking others' reputations.
6. Investigate spy issues during the Cold War era.
- a. Compile a bibliography of popular videos and books related to spies during 1945-1989.
 - b. Locate news headlines via the library and the Internet regarding spy activity or suspected spy activity from 1945-1989.

- c. Research the role, capture, and conviction of Julius Rosenberg, Ethel Rosenberg, Morton Sobell, and Klaus Fuchs regarding transmitting atomic secrets to the U.S.S.R.
 - d. Compare the McCarthy hearings to the Salem witch trials as portrayed in Arthur Miller's *The Crucible*.
7. Investigate the Berlin Wall.
- a. How many East Berliners attempted to escape before and after the wall was erected?
 - b. How many people are known to have died in attempting to enter West Berlin?
 - c. What reasons do people give for attempting to defect from a communist country?
8. Research and use the preferred signs for the countries in the video. Some resources on international signs are:
- a. Sandager, O.K. (ed.), *Sign Languages Around the World*, O.K. Publishing, CA, 1986.
 - b. *Selected Signs Around the World* (video), Sign Media, Inc., Burtonsville, MD.
 - c. *Countries Around the World* (video), Sign Media, Inc., Burtonsville, MD.
9. Evaluate capitalist ideology from American and Soviet perspectives. Use as a reference Ayn Rand's procapitalist novel *Atlas Shrugged*.

WEBSITES

Explore the Internet to discover sites related to this topic. Check the CFV website for related information (<http://www.cfv.org>).

SUMMARY

The Cold War defines post-World War II relations between the United States and the U.S.S.R. where direct military action was avoided in the years between 1945-1989 by utilizing espionage, economic warfare, propaganda, surrogate wars, and the race for space. Allies at the end of World War II, the relationship

crumbled after their common enemy, Hitler, was defeated.

Shortly after the war ended, Churchill dubbed the division between communist and free Europe as the “iron curtain,” a symbol of the Cold War. Then the Truman Doctrine began the U.S. policy of *containment*. Although Soviets attempted to oust Allied military and ideology from West Berlin, the Soviet blockade of West Berlin was thwarted by Allied airlifts.

In 1949, the United States established NATO, the Soviets created the Warsaw Pact, and the nuclear arms race began. In 1950, the Cold War moved to Asia via the United States- and Soviet-backed Korean War. Frustrations with world-wide communist aggression exploded at home for Americans through the Rosenberg spy conviction, and Joseph McCarthy’s relentless defamation of purported American communists.

Nikita Khrushchev led Cold War relations into an era of *peaceful coexistence* based on the premise that capitalism would soon self-destruct. In this context, Americans merely observed when Soviet forces brutally crushed the Hungarian revolution. The U.S.S.R.’s launching of Sputnik caused Americans to doubt their technological superiority. Tensions further increased when a 1960 American reconnaissance plane was downed over the U.S.S.R. The daily influx of Germans out of communist East Germany through West Berlin prompted construction of the infamous Berlin Wall.

In 1962, the United States discovered Soviet missile sites in Cuba. President John F. Kennedy put American forces on alert and issued an ultimatum to Khrushchev, only narrowly averting nuclear war. President Lyndon B. Johnson continued the policy of communist containment, sending American troops to Vietnam against Soviet-backed forces. President Richard Nixon and Soviet leader Leonid Brezhnev agreed to limit arms. *Détente* continued during Jimmy Carter’s presidency, but the Cold War returned via

surrogate wars in Angola and Afghanistan. Ronald Reagan verbally attributed evil and lack of peace to the Soviets while keeping lines of communication open. The United States continued to build arms to negotiate from a position of strength.

The Soviet economy was unable to continue the arms race and take care of its citizens' basic needs. Mikhail Gorbachev instituted policies of *glasnost* and *perestroika*, and loosened control of eastern European countries. In a powerful, symbolic event, Germany was reunited and the Berlin Wall, a symbol of the Cold War, was demolished--leaving the United States and Soviet Union as they began in 1945--uneasy allies.